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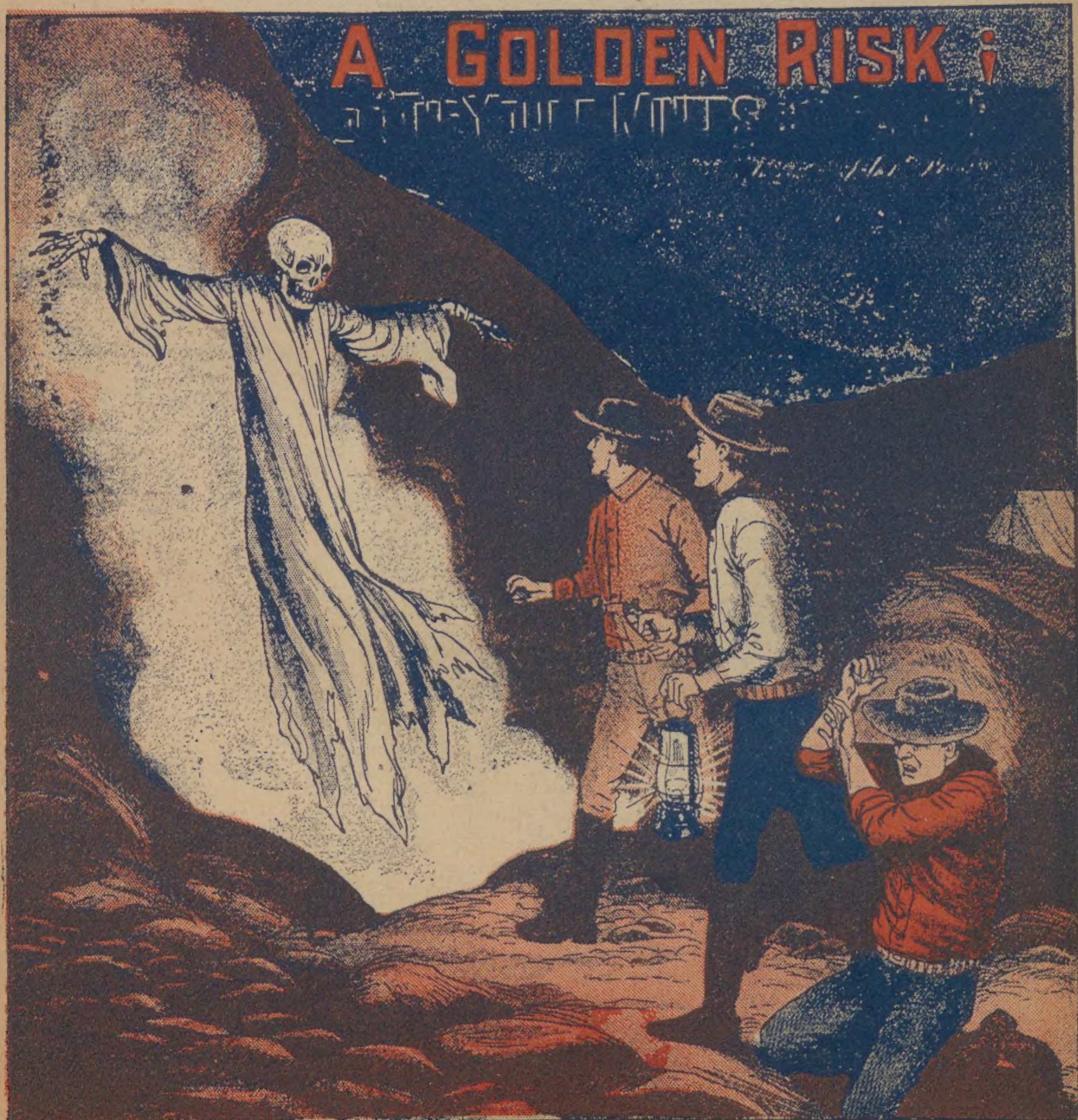
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BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE GOLDEN RISK ;"



Suddenly, without warning, a volume of thick white smoke issued from the opening, and as it melted away there was revealed, apparently floating in the air, a phosphorescent draped skeleton. "Howly mother!" gasped Corney, falling upon his knees in terror.



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# FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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No. 953

NEW YORK, JANUARY 4, 1924

## A GOLDEN RISK

OR, THE YOUNG MINERS OF DELLA CRUZ

By A SELF-MADE MAN

### CHAPTER I.—The Aztec Vase.

"What an odd-looking vase, Cyril," said Will Adams, a good-looking, well-dressed boy of sixteen, as he held up to the light a curious relic of a past century.

It was made of bronze, profusely carved, and there seemed to be some sort of an engraved inscription on one side in a circular space left plain to receive it.

"Isn't it?" replied Cyril Young, with a smile.

Cyril was a handsome, square-shouldered lad of seventeen, and he and Will were chums. They were standing in front of one of the windows of Cyril's room, on the third story of a handsome villa residence on Staten Island, overlooking the Narrows and upper New York Bay. It was the early part of the month of June; the air was balmy, and the sun was kissing myriads of little wavelets which the morning breeze had set in motion. Cyril's parents were well-to-do people. A few days before Mr. Young had sailed for Europe on a combined business and pleasure trip and had taken Mrs. Young and their daughter Edith with him, leaving Cyril in charge of Professor Euclid, his private tutor, who was fitting both boys for college. Will Adams had taken up his temporary abode with his friend Cyril, as his father was away on a business tour of the far Northwest and his mother was dead. The boys were never so happy as when in each other's company. Their tastes and general views of life were similar. In a word, they were a sort of pocket edition of Damon and Pythias.

"Where did you get it, Cyril?" asked Will, turning the antique vase over and over in his hands, but with great care.

"I picked it up in a Third avenue curiosity shop," replied his friend. "It cost me three dollars."

"Looks to me as if you had got a bargain."

"I am not sure of that, though it is true the dealer wanted five for it at first, but finally agreed to let me have it for three, as that was all the funds I had to spare."

"It's worth three dollars as a curiosity. How old do you think it is?"

"You've got me. It might be centuries old, and then, again, it might be quite modern. I'm going

to put its age up to Professor Euclid. He's something of an archæologist, you know."

"It's hardly possible, I think, that any valuable specimen of ancient workmanship, such as this appears to be, would be floating around second-hand shops in New York City," said Will, reflectively.

"That's right. I'll bet we'll find it's a bogus specimen, got up by some clever European artist in the metal line to swindle a collector."

"It would look better if it had a good rubbing up."

"I'm going to clean it after I've shown it to the professor."

"That's a curious inscription. It certainly isn't Latin, nor does it resemble Greek."

"Looks to me like a species of hieroglyphics."

"The ancient Egyptians used hieroglyphics to express themselves."

"I've seen lots of illustrations of hieroglyphics, but never anything just like this," said Cyril. "Let's look the matter up in the encyclopædia."

While they were thus engaged, with the vase prominently displayed before them, there came a knock upon the door. Neither of the boys heard the knock, so interested were they in the subject before them. Presently the door was opened, and a little, weazened old man, in a somewhat faded but scrupulously clean brown suit, appeared in the opening. This was Professor Euclid, the private tutor. He walked softly into the room, closing the door behind him, and as he drew near to the boys the vase attracted his sharp eyes.

"Good-morning, professor," said both boys in a breath; but the learned gentleman, for once in his life at least, forgot to respond to the salutation.

"Where did you get this, Master Cyril?" he asked, at length, bending a questioning look upon his eldest pupil.

Cyril told him how it came into his possession.

"Has it any real value, Professor Euclid?" the lad concluded, eagerly.

The professor made no reply, but turned the article over slowly and critically in his fingers.

"I got it so cheap that I'm afraid it's an imitation of some original, or perhaps the creation of a relic manufacturer."

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"What do you think it is?" asked the professor, with a keen glance.

"I haven't any idea. To me it looks like an old Roman or Greek vase."

"Nothing of the kind," replied the professor, sharply.

"It's a fake, then," said Cyril, in a disappointed tone, for, though he had had doubts about its genuineness, yet he had secretly hoped that he might be mistaken.

"No, Master Cyril," replied Professor Euclid, slowly, "this is no fake."

"No fake, sir?"

"No. It is a genuine Aztec vase, of the time of Montezuma the Second, who was elected king of Mexico in 1502. This vase is, therefore, four centuries old."

"You don't say!" almost gasped Cyril in surprise, while Will Adams seemed to be equally astonished.

"There is an inscription on it, I see," went on the professor, peering fixedly at the queer characters cut in the metal. "I am very much interested in this, my lad. You will let me take it home with me to-day, as I should like to try and decipher these rude characters?" And the old man looked eagerly into his pupil's face, while he clutched the vase as if loath to give it up.

"Then you have given some study to the Aztecs, have you, professor?" asked Cyril.

"I have given many, many years of my life to a patient research of the early Mexican race. It is a passion—a hobby with me," cried the learned man, his eyes lighting up with the fire of an enthusiast. "The history of ancient Mexico exhibits two distinct and widely differing periods, the former of which, that of the Toltecs, appears to have been begun in the seventh and ended in the twelfth century; while the second, that of the Aztecs, began in the year 1200, and may be said to have been closed by the conquest by Cortez in 1519, for its existence as a nation ceased with the Spanish domination."

"I read something about the Aztecs not long ago in a popular magazine," said Cyril. "I remember the article stated that those people had one supreme god and something like two hundred inferior ones. I can't recall the name of the chief divinity—it was a jaw-breaker. Had I been able to pronounce it, I think it would have loosened every tooth in my head," he grinned.

"The name of the patron god of the Aztecs was Huitzilopochtli," said Professor Euclid, glibly.

"You say it easily enough, professor," replied Cyril, "but it looked a great deal worse than that in print. The article went on to say that this Huitzilo-whatever-you-call-it had splendid temples in every city of the empire, and that his altars were drenched with the blood of human sacrifice. The smell of these places was like slaughter-houses."

"That is quite true, Master Cyril," answered the professor, gravely. "To supply victims for these sacrifices the emperors made wars on all the neighboring states and levied a certain number of men, woman and children by way of indemnity. These victims were borne in triumphal processions, and to the sound of music, to the summit of the great temples, where the priests,

in the sight of assembled crowds, bound them to the sacrificial stone and, opening their breast, tore from it the bleeding heart, which was either laid before the image of their gods or eaten by the worshipers, after having been carefully cut up and mixed with maize."

"Oh, my!" exclaimed Will. "I'm glad I didn't live in old Mexico. Just think of having your heart torn out of you while you were still alive."

"I've heard that Montezuma had amassed fabulous wealth in the capital city of Mexico at the time Cortez conquered the country, and that he hid a lot of it to keep the Spaniards from getting hold of it," said Cyril, eagerly.

"Such is the fact, Master Cyril," replied Professor Euclid, tenderly caressing the bronze vase. "More than that: the famous mines of Montezuma, from which he procured his marvelous store of gold and silver, were never discovered by the Spanish conquerors, though Cortez used every effort to wring the secret from the captive monarch. Their location is still a mystery—a mystery which I myself have tried in vain to unravel."

"You, professor!" exclaimed Cyril, in astonishment.

"If you are ready, young gentlemen," said Professor Euclid, abruptly, "we will go on with our morning studies."

## CHAPTER II.—Struck by Lightning.

Professor Euclid devoted four hours daily—Saturday and Sunday, of course, excepted—to the instruction of Cyril Young and Will Adams—from ten to twelve and from one to three, taking his lunch with the boys in the spacious dining-room of the Young mansion. Promptly at three o'clock the professor took his departure for his home, which was about a mile distant, with the precious vase wrapped up under his arm.

"By the way, Cyril you seemed mighty anxious to know something about those lost mines of the Montezumas," said Will. "The professor, however, didn't seem very anxious to gratify your curiosity."

"That's right. He changed the subject pretty abruptly, I thought. He's a curious old chap, isn't he?"

"Almost as curious as the vase itself, eh?" laughed his friend. "He might have answered your question, anyway. I was rather eager to learn something on that subject myself, too. I once read a story about a lost Peruvian mine, which the Inca had sealed up after the victories of Pizarro had made that adventurous Spaniard master of the country, and the tale fascinated me more than anything I ever read before."

"There is certainly something attractive about the rediscovery of a lost mine."

"That's what there is. I wouldn't mind discovering a few myself," grinned Will.

"A few? Wouldn't one satisfy you?"

"Hardly. I yearn to take the wind out of Vanderbilt's sails."

"You're quite modest in your desires, Will."

"I can't help that. I was born that way."

"Do you mean to say you'd like to be the richest man in the world?"



"No. I was only joking. A million is good enough for me. I wouldn't know what to do with any more."

"I'm afraid we both will have to do a lot of hustling before we get to be worth a million."

"The professor seems to have interested himself in those lost Aztec mines, from the way he spoke. One wouldn't think, to look at him, that he cared for a lot of wealth. Anyway, he's too old to enjoy a big windfall. Now, with you and I it would be different. We have lots of time ahead of us to spend it in."

"Sure we have—if we should live," replied Cyril.

"Well, according to life insurance statistics, we have a pretty fair chance."

"I'm going to strike the professor again on the subject of the Montezuma mines. I'm satisfied that he knows a deal about them. You heard him say that the study of the Aztecs and other early Mexican people was a hobby with him."

"It's a great thing to know as much as Professor Euclid," said Will. "But for all that, he hasn't got wealthy by his knowledge."

"Well, Will, let's take a spin up the road as far as Blankville on our bicycles. What say?"

"I'm willing."

"There's Corney now. I'll send him for our wheels."

Corney McFaul was the gardener's assistant. He was a good-natural Irish lad, a late arrival from the green isle of Erin, and the boys liked him very much indeed.

"Hello, Corney?" called Cyril.

"Yis, sor," answered the boy, coming forward and touching his hat respectfully.

"You know where we keep our bicycles, don't you?"

"Thim little things wid two whales apiece, is it you mane?"

"Yes."

"Shure I do, sor."

"I wish you'd bring them 'round here. We're going out for a spin."

Corney dropped the handle of the lawn-mower and started for the shed where the boys kept their wheels.

"I never saw a more obliging young fellow than Corney," said Will, watching the Irish lad till he disappeared around the corner of the house.

"He certainly is a treasure in that way," agreed Cyril.

"Where did you father pick him up?"

"At Ellis Island, the day he disembarked from the Celtic."

At this point Corney reappeared, wheeling the two bicycles along in regulation fashion.

"I'll have to get a wheel for you, Corney," said Cyril, "and teach you how to ride it. It's splendid exercise."

"Yis, sor; thank ye, sor, but shure it do be plenty of exercise I find in kaping things nate about the place. For what wid lookin' after the garden, and helpin' the cook in the kitchen, and——"

"I know all about that, Corney," laughed Cyril. "That's work, but riding a wheel is great fun."

"Is that a fact?"

"That's what we find it, eh, Will?"

"Sure thing," replied Adams, mounting his bicycle.

It was about three miles to Blankville, and Cyril and Will were not long in covering that distance. As they started on their return trip they noticed that a thunder storm was coming up from the direction of New Jersey.

"We'll have to get a move on, or we'll be caught by the storm before we can reach home," said Cyril.

"Oh, we can stop at the professor's if it comes to that," said Will.

"So we can, but I'd rather go straight on to the house."

They started down the road at a lively gait, but the storm came up faster than they thought it would. The wind swooped on the island with a rush, tearing through the trees and churning up eddies of dust in the road in a way most unpleasant for the boys. The declining sun was engulfed by the electrically charged clouds, and the air grew dark and threatening. Then the first big drops of the oncoming rain were blown into their faces while they were yet a mile from their destination.

"We'll have to stop at Professor Euclid's, after all," said Will, as a brilliant flash of lightning lit up the sky, presently followed by a heavy roll of thunder.

"Well, his house is only a short distance away, up yonder lane. We've got to make record time, or we'll be soaked before we get there."

They made their pedals hum and flew along through the fast-increasing rain like a pair of winged Mercuries. The outer gate of the professor's place was reached just in the nick of time. Will jumped from his wheel and opened the gate for Cyril to pass through, and then followed his chum up to the back porch as fast as he could follow. Hardly were they under shelter when the rain came down in a perfect flood.

"We just escaped it, chappie," said Will, as Cyril rang the bell, the sound of which was drowned in a terrific peal of thunder, seemingly close at hand. Mrs. Benson, the professor's housekeeper, came to the door and admitted the boys.

"Dear me! are you wet? Come right into the kitchen and dry yourselves by the fire," she said, with warm hospitality. "Then you can go up to the professor. You'll find him in his room."

Cyril and Will stood their wheels against the wall of the entry and availed themselves of the housekeeper's kind invitation. The boys were exceedingly glad they had found shelter as they stood before the bright kitchen fire and listened to the battle of the elements outside. The dampness soon dried out of the boys' garments, and they decided to seek the professor in his den—a large, square room on the second floor, overlooking the road.

Cyril knocked twice on the door without receiving an answer; but this was not surprising, as the professor was a trifle deaf, and the storm, now central above the island, made a great racket. Under these circumstances Cyril took the liberty of turning the knob and opening the door. As he did so a tremendous shock swayed the house from roof to basement. The boys were dashed against the corner of the bookcase as if seized



and flung there by a giant hand. Every object in the room, including the lean form of Professor Euclid, who was bending over his writing-table, in the center of the room, under the glow of a swinging bronze lamp, was for the moment lit up with a dazzling, supernatural sort of glare, the professor himself seeming to be the very center of the electrical display, while the roar of the explosion filled the boys' ears with a stunning violence that cannot be described. The vase had been struck by a thunderbolt.

### CHAPTER III.—What Happened to the Professor.

It was several moments after the light had faded from the room, leaving everything apparently as it was before, that the boys recovered their faculties and their feet. They heard the clatter of Mrs. Benson's shoes on the stair, and presently the startled face of the housekeeper appeared at the door.

"Goodness gracious!" she exclaimed, in a quavering voice. "Has the house been struck by lightning?"

"I guess it was," replied Cyril. "Will and I were knocked all of a heap up against the bookcase. Never felt such a shock in my life, did you, Will?"

"I should say not," answered his chum, who was partly dazed yet from the shaking up he had been subjected to.

Another brilliant flash lit up the room and the landscape outside and another terrific peal of thunder shook the atmosphere. Mrs. Benson screamed and covered her head with her apron. Both boys turned pale and shivered for a moment, for their nerves had been badly upset. The most remarkable feature of it all was that Professor Euclid never stirred or seemed the least bit disturbed by it all. He continued to lean over the table in the same attitude the boys had noticed when they started to enter the room. It was the attitude of one engaged in writing.

The bronze Aztec vase was propped up before him, as if it engaged his attention. Several of the curiosities scattered about the room had been displaced by the shock the house had undergone, among other things an expensive glass jar from the ruins of Pompeii, presented to the professor by an old college friend, and which he prized highly, which lay in a thousand pieces at the base of the mantel. The rain beat down heavier than ever upon the roof and against the windows. It seemed to be coming down in sheets.

"Gee whiz! how it is pouring!" exclaimed Will, when the blue glare of the lightning had died out of the room again.

"I should say it is," replied Cyril. "But I say, old man, has the professor gone stone deaf all at once? He hasn't moved since we entered the room."

Mrs. Benson uncovered her head as the boy spoke and looked toward her master. The lamp above the table, which had been swinging to and fro, now came to a rest, and its soft light shone clear and bright upon the motionless figure beneath. As the three gazed in great wonderment upon the learned little man, who might

have been taken for a graven image, for all the sign of life he exhibited, something glistening dropped from the ceiling and settled upon the old man's bald head. It was a big drop of water. A second drop followed and settled beside the other, and then came a third and fourth in quick succession. If anything should have disturbed the professor, that ought to have done it. He never made a sign that he felt it.

At that moment Mrs. Benson uttered an exclamation and pointed at the ceiling above her master's head. The boys' eyes followed the direction indicated by her finger and saw a small, dark hole that seemed to have been punctured through the white plaster by a hot iron. Moisture was gathering about it and discharging itself in drops upon the professor's head.

"My gracious!" cried Cyril. "What does that mean?"

The housekeeper, struck by a sudden presentiment of evil, rushed up to Professor Euclid and looked into his set face, at the same time laying her hand upon his arm. Then she uttered a scream that brought the boys to her side.

"Merciful heaven!" she exclaimed. "He is dead!"

"Dead!" gasped the two lads in one breath.

Yes, Professor Euclid was, indeed, dead. Killed in the fraction of a second by the bolt of lightning, which had entered by the roof, passed through his body and thence through the rug to the boards of the floor, whence in some unaccountable way it had been deflected to the side of the room, leaving a blazed trail behind it. As they straightened the professor up they observed a blistered patch of skin upon the front of his skull, where the flesh beneath looked discolored. His eyes were wide open, and he looked so lifelike that the boys could hardly believe he was really dead. Cyril found it difficult to remove the penholder from his stiffened fingers.

"That is terrible," he said, with some emotion, for he liked his old instructor.

Will Adams said nothing, but he showed that he was greatly upset.

"We'd better lay him out on the sofa," Cyril said to the weeping housekeeper.

"Do as you think best," she sobbed. "Poor old gentleman! He was a kind and indulgent master."

"Come, Will, lend a hand," said Cyril.

As they straightened the old man's limbs upon the lounge Will pointed to his left trousers leg. The lightning had ripped it from the waistband straight down to the top of the gaiter, which was also rent into a shapeless piece of leather.

"He never knew what struck him, Cyril," said Will, with a mournful shake of his head.

"Then he couldn't have suffered anything."

Cyril removed the coverlet from the professor's bed, which stood in the alcove, and covered the body from view.

"We feel very sorry for you, Mrs. Benson," he said to the distressed housekeeper. "If we can be of any assistance in this unforeseen emergency we will gladly do what we can."

"Thank you, young gentlemen. It is very good of you, and I shan't forget it," replied Mrs. Benson. "As soon as the storm is over you had better notify the coroner. And you ought to telegraph Professor Euclid's nephew, Robert Morri-



son, who lives in Harlem, right away. I will get you his address."

Mrs. Benson rose, dried her eyes and left the chamber of death. The boys went to one of the windows and looked out. The rain was still falling in a lively fashion, but the storm itself had passed off oceanward.

"It is clearing up fast," remarked Will.

"It was short, but mighty fierce while it lasted. Poor old professor! Who would have expected he would have gone off like this?" said Cyril, sadly.

"It seems to be the unexpected that always happens."

"What shall we do now for an instructor?"

Will shook his head gloomily.

"I give it up," he answered. "You will have to cable your father for instructions, as he left you in charge of Professor Euclid."

"We may have to give up our vacation trip to Mexico, where the professor was going to take us."

"Oh, I guess we're old enough to go by ourselves."

"Well, it depends on what my governor says. He has confidence in my ability to look out for myself, so I don't think he will veto any reasonable plans we may form for the summer."

"I should hope not. As to my father, he's perfectly satisfied when I'm in your company; therefore there won't be any kick coming from him."

The boys came to a pause beside the table at which the old professor had been engaged when struck down.

"He was writing something," said Cyril, looking at a thick notebook, in which Professor Euclid, in his crabbed hand, had closely scrawled a great many lines, the last word ending abruptly.

There were several open notebooks near, the exposed pages of which were inscribed with strange characters, and there was a big printed volume lying close to where the old man's elbow had been, which was opened at a page covered with similar, but enlarged characters.

"He was translating that inscription on your vase," said Will, pointing at the Aztec relic lying against a small, closed book.

"I believe he was," said Cyril, snatching up the notebook and scanning the professor's penmanship, which was not easy to read.

"What does it say?" asked Will, eagerly.

"You'll have to give me time to decipher his pothooks—they are something weird in their way."

#### CHAPTER IV.—What Professor Euclid Wrote Before He Died.

Cyril sat down in the chair lately occupied by the dead professor and began to study the writing. As he slowly made out the meaning of the words he grew intensely excited. Will, leaning over him, and also taking in the sense of the manuscript, shared in the feeling which agitated his chum. By slow degrees they mastered all that Professor Euclid had written down up to the moment he had been so suddenly taken from the world. It ran as follows:

"June 13, 190—.

"At last the dream of my life is about to be realized. I have this day come into possession of an Aztec vase of priceless value—priceless because it conveys the secret I have long searched for in vain, a secret hidden from the world for four centuries. On this vase is an inscription in Aztec hieroglyphics intelligible only to him who by profound study and long research is able to translate the meaning thereof. This inscription is the key to the location of the lost mines of Montezuma II., sealed up by the king's orders, that they might escape spoliation at the hands of the victorious Spanish adventurer, Hernando Cortez, and his followers. It was engraved on this vase by an artist of the first order in the empire, who was immediately put to death when he had finished his word, that the secret might remain alone with the king himself. Cortez knew that these mines, incomparably rich in gold and silver ore, existed, and by some means it came to his knowledge that the secret of their location had been engraved upon a bronze vase of peculiar workmanship; but threats, and even torture, failed to make the captive Montezuma disclose where it had been hidden, and the most diligent search of the country failed to reveal the whereabouts of the mines. After four hundred years this vase has turned up in the city of New York, and was yesterday purchased for a song by a young pupil of mine, Cyril Young, from whom I have borrowed it. The translation of this inscription has not been an easy matter even for me, who is regarded as an expert in the language and hieroglyphics of the Aztec peoples. I will jot it down here in its most lucid shape, that I may profit by the wonderful intelligence it conveys.

"The lost mines lie in the heart of the Della Cruz mountains, that mark the boundary between the States of Hidalgo and Della Cruz. The exact spot is one hundred and fifty miles southeast of the city of Mexico, and is marked by a low, flat mountain peak (the site of the great altar of the chief god Huitzilopochtli) which stands between two twin peaks of conspicuous altitude. At the time the mines were sealed up the monstrous figure of the god was taken down and placed within the mines for safety. When the morning sun has risen to a point in the heavens that the two ends of a line drawn exactly through its center will rest upon each of the twin peaks the extreme point of the shadow cast down the valley by the peaks should be marked at the same time. At a certain spot an imaginary line, intersecting these two points—the spot cannot be mistaken, for from there you can see—"

Here Professor Euclid's description terminated; for at that point his life went out like the snuffing of a candle.

"Too bad," remarked Cyril, as he looked up into his friend's face. "The most important part of the description, probably, will remain a lost quantity."

"What do you think of it, Cyril?" asked Will, in a voice of excited interest.

"I think we have reached the borderland of a wonderful discovery."

"That's what I think, too. The professor was a most astonishing man. Without his minute



knowledge of the country of the Aztecs and the history of that peculiar race, I am satisfied that a literal translation of the meaning of the hieroglyphics on that vase, if made by an ordinary expert, would have been valueless at this day, after the lapse of four hundred years."

"You are right, Will. Its meaning could only be made clear by the mental retrospect in connection with an absolute familiarity with conditions as they existed at the time the mine was sealed by Montezuma. I am satisfied the professor had all the landmarks down fine, and that he alone of all men in this world could have laid his fingers upon the lost entrance to those mines."

"Had he but lived a few minutes longer——"

"Will, there is something weird about this thing."

"What do you mean?" asked his chum, a bit startled by his friend's manner.

"I mean that it almost looks as if heaven does not intend that the lost mines of Montezuma should be brought to light."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because of the strange and instantaneous manner of the professor's death."

"I can't see the point."

"Notice how the description breaks off. 'The spot cannot be mistaken, for from there you can see——' He was on the point of noting down a vital clue. Some natural landmark, perhaps, which marks the entrance to the mines. Half a dozen more words would probably have betrayed the secret, and yet those half a dozen words were fated never to be written."

"Pshaw!" replied Will. "It's simply a mere coincidence that the professor was struck down at that particular point in his description. It would have answered better, if heaven intended the mines to remain forever a mystery, that the vase should not have reached the professor's eye at all. The fact that it did come to the attention of the one man, of all others, able to read and apply his knowledge to a practical translation of the hieroglyphic inscription shows there is no special reason why the secret of the mines should not come out some time."

"There is sense in your argument, I admit, but——"

"Come off, Cyril; you're getting superstitious, aren't you?"

"It isn't that, old fellow. Heaven may have had reason for permitting the professor to get so far in his description as a warning——"

"To whom? Not to Professor Euclid himself, for he is past such a thing."

"To you and I, who were bound to find the writing."

"Don't get dopy, Cyril. Put that book into your pocket, roll up the vase, for it belongs to you, and let's get to town to notify the coroner. Hurry up, for I hear Mrs. Benson coming upstairs. She went to get the address of the professor's nephew, to whom we are to telegraph the melancholy news."

Cyril thought his chum's advice good and followed it, he had just finished wrapping up the Aztec relic when the housekeeper re-entered the room.

"Here is Mr. Morrison's address, Master Cyril. I mislaid it and it took me some time to find it. I hope you will excuse the delay."

"Don't mention it, Mrs. Benson."

"We ought to send some one to keep you company, Mrs. Benson, don't you think?" suggested Will.

"Well," she replied, thankfully, "if you don't mind calling in at Major Bradford's, the first house you come to on the road below, and tell him what has happened, I shall consider it a favor."

"Certainly, Mrs. Benson," replied Cyril. "We will do that with pleasure."

The boys went downstairs, got their wheels and started off. They stopped at Major Bradford's house, communicated the sad news of the professor's death, and then went on again. At the Young mansion they stopped long enough for Cyril to take the precious Aztec vase to his room, and then they continued on to the town, where they hunted up the coroner and informed him of the peculiar manner in which Professor Euclid had met his death. This duty over, Cyril went to the hotel, where there was an office of the Western Union Telegraph Company, and forwarded a message to Robert Morrison, who lived in West 142d street, Harlem.

It was dark now, so the boys hustled to get back to their supper, which they knew the cook would have waiting for them. On their arrival they circulated the news of the unexpected death of the professor among the help, which consisted of a cook, chambermaid, gardener and his assistant, Corney McFaul. Professor Euclid had been a familiar visitor at the Young home for many months, and was well-known, too, and much respected by the servants.

## CHAPTER V.—Cyril's Plans.

After they had eaten their dinner the boys went right up to Cyril's room and sat down to have a talk.

"Let's go over the professor's notebook again," said Will, with an eagerness unusual with him. "I might as well admit I'm decidedly interested in those Montezuma mines."

Accordingly Cyril produced the book and they read over again all that Professor Euclid had set down in relation to that fascinating subject.

"The professor placed their situation as in the heart of the Della Cruz mountains, which divides the States of Hidalgo and Della Cruz," remarked Will. "Get out your atlas, Cyril, and let's see if we can form some idea of the place on the map of Mexico."

A standard atlas was brought forward and opened up on the table. Cyril turned to a good-sized map of Mexico.

"Here we are," he said.

"Get out your dividers."

Cyril hunted up his box of drawing implements and took out a pair of brass compasses.

"Now mark off one hundred and fifty miles on the scale," said Will.

Cyril did so, setting the dividers at that width. "Here is the city of Mexico," went on Will, indicating the spot on the map with the point of his little finger. "Stick one of the points right on it."

Cyril put one of the sharp legs of the dividers



in the little round ring which indicated a capital city.

"Here is the compass point indicating north," continued Will. "Let me see, this should be about southeast."

Cyril swung the other point of the dividers around till it rested on a line with the direction shown by Will.

"Where does it bring us to?" asked Will.

"Into the midst of the Della Cruz mountains."

"Gee whiz!" cried Will, excitedly. "That confirms the first of the professor's directions, doesn't it?"

"It certainly does," replied Cyril, interested beyond measure by the fact.

"One hundred and fifty miles southeast of the city of Mexico, in the heart of the Della Cruz mountains. That's the way he wrote it and that's the way we find it. On that spot is supposed to stand a low, flat mountain peak between two twin peaks of conspicuous altitude, something like this," and Will took a sheet of blank paper and drew a representation of the three mountain peaks as he judged they ought to look. The twin peaks must bear a remarkable resemblance to each other, for, according to the professor, a line drawn exactly through the center of the rising sun at a certain hour will rest on the top of each peak, like this."

Will, with a small ruler, drew the line, and then added a little circle in the center of the line and between the peaks to represent the sun.

"The shadows cast by the peaks will come, say, here," and Will made a couple of dots. "Now, I will draw a line intersecting them, thus," and he did so. "Now, at a certain point along this line something is to be seen that furnishes a clue to the place where the lost mines lie. Have I made the matter clear?"

"As clear as crystal," replied Cyril, who had followed his chum's exposition of the theory of the thing with much interest.

"The interesting question is, at what point along an imaginary line of indefinite width is the spot from which this mysterious something is to be seen?" said Will, looking at his chum.

"Well, I'll tell you how that might be arrived at," said Cyril, reflectively.

"How?" asked Will, with some eagerness.

"If we were on the spot, and had ascertained the exact position of the imaginary line in question, by starting out, each of us from the opposite points of the shadow, as previously marked according to the directions, and walking slowly toward a common center, we might, by keeping our eyes carefully upon the center of the low, flat-topped mountain, reach that particular point where one of us would see——"

"What?" grinned Will.

"I can't say what, of course; but it must be something out of the ordinary in the landscape which is invisible to the eye except when the observer is in one particular position."

"But, Cyril, while, by following out your directions, we might actually see the landmark in question, it might not of itself be peculiar enough to attract our attention; while if we know what the landmark was we should then be in a position to identify it the moment our eyes lighted on it."

"Exactly, Will; but we don't know what the

landmark, as we presume the unknown clue to be, is, and no amount of guesswork on our part will supply the deficiency. The professor's life was cut off at a most inopportune moment. Had he lived to write even three or four more words, the key of the situation would probably now be in our hands."

"That's right," nodded Will, with a lugubrious expression on his face. "Still, what good would that do us, unless we went to Mexico and made use of our knowledge on the spot?"

"We intended to go to Mexico this summer, didn't we?"

"Under the professor's guidance—yes."

"Well, what's the matter with our going, anyway, on our own responsibility?"

"Do you mean that, Cyril Young?"

"I do."

Will sat back in his chair and looked at his chum a moment or two without speaking.

"And is it your idea to make your way into the heart of the Della Cruz mountains at a point one hundred and fifty miles southeast of the city of Mexico?" he asked, at length.

"It is," replied Cyril, coolly.

"Without a more tangible clue than we possess in the professor's notebook?"

"Yes."

"And, of course, you expect me to go along with you?"

"Yes. You and—Corney."

"You mean to take Corney?" in surprise.

"Why not? Do you object to him?"

"Not in the least. I rather like the idea of having him along. But will he go?"

"He'll go with me all right, never fear."

"But hold on there. Ain't you rather premature in making your plans? How do you know that your father——"

"I'm going to write to the governor to-morrow morning full particulars of the professor's death. It would be of little use to cable the bare fact, as I would have to send a letter anyway. I'll tell my father what our plans for the summer are, and ask his permission to carry them out."

"And you think he will agree to let the three of us—you, I and Corney—make this proposed trip to Mexico?"

"I think he will," replied Cyril, confidently.

"If he will, it will be simply great," cried Will, with sparkling eyes. "We'll have the time of our lives, whether we find anything out about the Montezuma mines or not."

"Well, I'm going especially to investigate the professor's description. Somehow I've great faith in the idea that something is going to come of it. I shall be sure of it the moment my eyes actually rest on those twin peaks with the low, flat mountain midway between them. I'm curious to learn just what the missing clue is, and if there is such a thing as finding it out, I'm going to do it."

Cyril spoke in a determined way that showed he meant every word he spoke. He had plenty of American pluck and energy—qualities he inherited from his father, who had started out in life a poor boy, without friends or influence, and made a place and financial standing for himself before he reached the age of forty.

Cyril was as good as his word about writing to his father next morning. While awaiting a



reply, which he did not expect before the first week in July, the two boys employed the time making preparations for the proposed trip which they confidently expected to make. They got books descriptive of Mexico, its topography, climate, inhabitants, mode of living there, and a host of other details which they felt they ought to know. All this in addition to the copious information the dead professor had already imparted to them at odd intervals.

They proposed to make the journey to the city of Mexico in the ordinary guise of tourists, but after that they expected to rough it, for they had no idea how long they would remain in the Della Cruz mountains prosecuting their search after the lost mines of the Montezumas. Corney McFaul was delighted with the idea of accompanying Cyril and Will to Mexico, or anywhere, in fact. As a matter of fact, he would have been just as ready to go with them to the North Pole, if that had been the object of their journey.

At last the expected letter arrived, and it contained the much-desired permission for Cyril to go to Mexico with his comrades, as originally determined on when it was expected that Professor Euclid would head the party. Mr. Young enclosed a couple of pages of practical advice. In his opinion it did well-balanced boys a world of good to be thrown upon their own resources and compelled to look out for themselves. It imparted to them a degree of confidence not otherwise obtainable and gave them the opportunity to accumulate valuable experience.

It was a bright morning early in July that the three boys left New York City for Mexico, via St. Louis and Kansas City. At the latter city they changed to the C., R. I. & P. R. R., and finally reached El Paso, which extended along a fertile and narrow valley upon the Rio Grande, in the Mexican State of Chihuahua. Here they connected with the Mexican Central Railroad. The first important stop in Mexican territory was at Chihuahua, the capital city of the State, where they stopped over a day to see the sights.

The next stop they made was at Durango, capital of the State of Durango, and a railroad junction. They also laid over at Zacatecas and San Luis Potosi. After that they did not get off the cars till they reached the city of Mexico, which is built upon a plain surrounded by mountains.

The boys remained a week in the capital, gathering information about the region of the Della Cruz mountain range, particularly that part they expected to explore.

Then one morning they took a train which carried them eastward through the mountains and then southward along the foothills and through a great valley to a small and unimportant town, whither they had already forwarded their baggage and supplies for their mountain trip.

## CHAPTER VI.—Pepita.

"Be the piper that played before Moses, what do yez call thot?" exclaimed Corney McFaul, on the third day after the boys had left the city of Mexico.

They were traveling along a dusty country road leading toward the southeast in a general way.

They had discarded the apparel of civilization, and were clothed in loose woolen shirts of a dark blue material, substantial trousers to match, stuck into the top of long boots, miner-fashion, while each wore a soft, broad-brimmed hat of the style affected by the American cowboy. A belt, to which was attached a holster, in which reposed an up-to-date six-shooter, was buckled about their waists. Each bestrode a strong, active-looking Mexican horse, while Corney led by a long rope a big, bright-eyed mule, loaded with the poles and canvas of a tent, as well as many bundles of supplies.

The sun shone from an unclouded sky, and, while the day was not unusually warm for Mexico, the boys, strangers to the climate, thought it was pretty hot. They had been jogging along since sunrise, and were looking for a convenient stream, which they had been informed ran through the neighborhood, to make a stop for rest and dinner, when they heard the clatter of horses' hoofs and the rattle of wheels behind them. Presently they turned their heads to see what was overhauling them.

Presently around the turn in the road swung an old, decrepit diligence—a sort of four-wheeled public stage-coach. It swayed to and fro on its springs like a small lugger in a cross sea. This crazy-looking conveyance was filled with male and female Mexicans of the lower order, who were chattering together like a lot of magpies. The driver was lashing his team of stout mules into a run, while on the seat beside him and on the roof were half a dozen picturesquely clad natives of the country, smoking the everlasting cigarette with the utmost composure, in spite of the jerky motion of their vehicle.

"That's a Mexican diligence," replied Cyril, in answer to Corney's exclamation.

"A diligence, is it? Faith, it seems to be all comin' apart, and it's full of payple, too."

"Don't worry, Corney; it isn't going to come to pieces. It's good for many moons yet," laughed Cyril.

With a rush and clatter the vehicle flew by them, the passengers inside craning their necks to get a view of the boys, as much a curiosity to them as they were to the lads.

"It's pipin' us off they are, do yez notice?" grinned Corney, doffing his big hat to a pretty senorita, who smiled back at him and showed a set of ivory teeth.

"There's the stream we're looking for, Cyril," said Will, at this point, waving his arm toward a glittering streak of water issuing from among the foothills and crossing the road about a quarter of a mile ahead. When they came to it they turned off toward a grove of trees, beneath which they tethered their animals with long ropes, after relieving the mule of its load. They built a small fire to make some coffee, which they sweetened with condensed milk, while the rest of their al fresco meal was made of American canned goods, with some maize bread they had procured at a small adobe farmhouse, as they called it, where they had picked up a breakfast that morning. They talked and dozed under the trees for the best part of the afternoon, until the heat of the day had somewhat subsided, when they resumed their journey.

Thus several days passed, and they drew near-



er and nearer to the Della Cruz mountains, whose outlines they could make out above the distant horizon. Cottages were frequently met with half-hidden amidst banana trees and coffee bushes, tall mango trees and flowers of every hue. The cottages were chiefly built of cane, with sides not over four feet, and roofs rising ten to twenty feet—some even taller. Brown women were busy at their household tasks, and brown children lay, like beetles, lazily in the shade of the sun.

Sunday afternoon found them resting in a shady spot within forty miles of the mountain range, which filled the horizon north and south as far as the eye could reach. Will and Corney had gone to sleep, but somehow or other Cyril didn't feel at all drowsy. He tried to pass away the time studying a small handbook of the Spanish language, in which the three boys had made some progress since they started from their home on Staten Island, but the effort was a failure. So he put the book into his pocket and started to wander about the neighborhood.

He came at length to a well-beaten path. Following this, he passed through a cactus hedge, which had hitherto obscured his view, and found himself in a large grove of pepper and mesquite trees, whose feathery leaves cast delicate shadows on the white ground. A stream ran along the path, and he crossed it further on by means of stepping-stones made out of horses' skulls.

"Gracious!" he exclaimed, in some surprise, "this is a new kind of bridge for crossing water. I wonder what great head originated such a scheme?"

The cacti that girdled the grove were of gigantic growth, and of the grotesque and even gruesome shapes, and in the dusk of the evening one might even fancy them the grim guardians of some ogre's castle beyond. Never having seen anything like them before, Cyril paused to examine them with the interest of a curiosity-hunter. While thus engaged he thought he heard a voice not far away. This fact did not disturb him, though in all probability he was startled by hearing a woman's scream. Then came the light patter of fleeing feet, mingled with the sound of heavier steps, apparently in pursuit.

"What's this I'm up against?" Cyril asked himself.

The sounds drew nearer rapidly, and above them the boy heard the frightened exclamations of a female interspersed with the fuller tones of a man's excited voice. All at once a lovely Spanish girl, attired in a bright-hued skirt, and a black lace mantilla supported by a high back comb, dashed into the opening where Cyril stood. A terrified expression rested on her beautiful olive countenance and shone from the depths of her liquid jet-black eyes. She appeared almost exhausted and at her wits' end. As she caught a glimpse of the handsome, stalwart American boy she uttered a little cry of hope and, rushing forward, threw herself almost on her knees at his feet, crying, in Spanish:

"Save me, senor! Save me!"

While Cyril did not exactly understand the words, her meaning was sufficiently clear. She was fleeing from some danger, and was begging his protection. Cyril was not a boy to desert any woman in distress, least of all so young and

pretty a specimen of real Andalusian loveliness. So he came to the scratch like the brave young American he was.

"I'll protect you all right," he replied, in good old Anglo-Saxon, and his attitude, though she did not understand his words, reassured the girl, for she rose and nestled close to his side, just as a splendid specimen of a Mexican ranchman hove into view, and then stopped suddenly at the unexpected picture before him.

For the moment the wind was all taken out of his sails, as it were. His look of astonishment, however, gradually yielded to a menacing expression. With a smothered oath he advanced upon the shrinking girl and her intrepid protector.

"What does this mean?" he demanded, haughtily, in Spanish, not a word of which the boy understood.

Cyril made no reply, probably because he did not know how to make himself understood to this picturesque-looking Mexican, who seemed to be proudly conscious of his peaked, cart-wheel hat, loaded down with gold and silver braid, his clanking spurs, his revolvers depending from his hips in embroidered holsters, his short and jaunty coat with its silver clasps, and last, but not least, his skin-tight leather breeches, that must have been drawn on as carefully as a pair of new gloves. The Mexican repeated his remark, with sundry additions and every token of impatience, and Cyril judged he was not in a humor to be trifled with.

## CHAPTER VII.—Cyril Stands Between Pepita and Senor Gonzales.

"I don't understand a word you say," blurted out Cyril, half-defiantly, for he was determined to stand by the beautiful girl who had thrown herself upon his protection.

"Ha! Un Americano!" exclaimed the Mexican, with a disagreeable smile.

"Yes. I'm an American all right," replied the boy, coolly.

"You do not speak Spanish, eh?"

"Muy poco" (Very little), answered Cyril.

"What are you doing here?"

"I was taking a walk."

"A walk?" sneered the Mexican. "This is the property—the hacienda—of Don Jose Calderon. You have no right here, senor."

"All right. Perhaps you'll tell me who this lady is?"

"Senorita Pepita, daughter of Don Jose."

"What is the trouble between you and the senorita? She does not seem to care for your society."

"That is my business, senor," replied the Mexican, somewhat fiercely. "You will leave her to me. Do you understand?"

"Excuse me, senor, but the senorita has claimed my protection for some reasons which points to you. Under the circumstances I can't desert her."

"Ha! You dare interfere in this matter, which is none of your business?" cried the Mexican, dropping his hand on the butt of one of his revolvers.

Senorita Pepita, who all this time had been



standing close to Cyril, watching the two alternately, but not understanding a word that passed between them, saw the man's action, and with a scream, sprang in front of Cyril as if to protect him. The boy, however, was not taken unawares, just the same. He had been narrowly watching the gaudily dressed Mexican while they were talking, and was quite prepared for some such move on his part. His hand was on his gun as quick as was the other's, and the Mexican saw that he was not going to get the drop on his young adversary as easily as he had supposed he would.

"Caramba!" he exclaimed, furiously.

Pepita, who seemed to be have recovered her self-possession, stamped her foot and said something sharply in Spanish.

Cyril understood what she said. It was short and to the point—an imperative request for the gentleman in the leather jeans to depart. The Mexican hesitated, then, with an oath, withdrew his gun, as if he meant to polish off the senorita's defender first and settle with the lady herself afterward. For a moment things looked serious, for Cyril, with red-hot American grit, had his revolver out and ready for instant action, while at the same time he proudly moved from behind the shelter of Pepita's person.

"Senorita Pepita has asked you to go, senor," he remarked, coolly. "So I think it's time you took a walk."

"I will kill you first!" hissed the Mexican.

"Come, now, senor, take your hand off your gun," said Cyril, resolutely. "I have the drop on you, so you may as well give in."

The Mexican hesitated, then, with an oath, withdrew his hand.

"That's right. I see you're sensible," said the boy. "Now, as the young lady has no use for you, I will have to ask you to turn around and git."

A malevolent gleam shot from the Mexican's eye.

"I will pay you for this, senor," he gritted, wrathfully. "You will find that Garcia Gonzales is not to be trifled with."

"And you, senor, have already discovered that Cyril Young can look out for himself."

At this interesting juncture another person suddenly appeared on the scene. He was an elderly man of pleasing and rather dignified personality. His attire was somewhat similar to that worn by Senor Gonzales, though more subdued. His appearance was received by Senorita Pepita with a little scream of satisfaction, and she flew at once to his side and began chattering to him at a great rate, and in no little excitement, pointing at Cyril and then at Garcia Gonzales. The Mexican was clearly discomfited by this unexpected addition to the proceedings, for without another word he turned upon his heel and strode off down the path and was soon lost beyond the cactus wall. Then the elderly gentleman advanced, held out his hand to Cyril with a smile and greeted him in Spanish. The boy understood him, but replied in English.

"Ah! You are an American, are you not?" asked the gentleman, in excellent English.

"I am. My name is Cyril Young, and my home is in New York."

"I am happy to make your acquaintance. Al-

low me to introduce myself. I am Don Jose Calderon. This is my hacienda. Permit me to make you known to my only child, Senorita Pepita."

Cyril removed his hat and bowed politely to the handsome young lady, who returned the salute in a most bewitching manner, as her father said something to her in Spanish.

"You will excuse her, Senor Young. She does not speak English."

"Neither do I speak Spanish—at least but little. Not enough to take any chances yet a while."

"Pepita tells me you rescued her from the undesirable attentions of Senor Gonzales, for whom she has a strong aversion. Indeed, I myself have warned him not to intrude upon this hacienda again, but he seems to have disregarded my command. He wishes to be considered a suitor for my child's hand, but I have told him that is quite impossible. His conduct to her this afternoon will make it impossible for him to present himself before her again. I thank you for interfering in Pepita's behalf, and offer you the hospitality of my hacienda as long as you choose to remain."

Don Jose spoke with the polished courtesy of a Spanish grandee of the old school, and his manner showed that he was grateful to Cyril for what he had done.

"I thank you very much for your invitation, Dan Jose," answered the boy, "but I am afraid I shall not be able to accept your hospitality, as I have two companions in the wood beyond, who are probably looking for me to return by this time."

"I shall be glad to include your two friends in my invitation. Can you prevail on them to spend a few days with us?"

He then said something to Pepita in her native tongue, whereupon she ran forward and addressed Cyril in Spanish in a most captivating way, the sense of which he clearly understood, though most of her words, spoken so rapidly, were Greek to him. She was adding her entreaties to her father's request, and what could the boy do in the face of so charming a pleader but agree to bring his friends to the hacienda at once.

"I will send one of my people with you," said Don Jose, putting a silver whistle to his lips and blowing a shrill blast. "He will guide you right to our door."

A peon dressed out in his best togs soon appeared. Don Jose addressed him in Spanish, whereupon the man turned, bowed to Cyril and intimated that he was at his service. Cyril then took temporary leave of the Spaniard and his lovely daughter and returned with the servitor to the wood, where he found Will and Corney impatiently awaiting his appearance. The pack mule was reloaded with their effects, and the three boys, preceded by Don Jose's servitor, took up their line of march for the hacienda.

## CHAPTER VIII.—At the Calderon Hacienda.

Nothing in Mexico ages but the people, and the smallest of them are seldom young. Hence it was a matter of no surprise to Cyril and Will, after having passed through the cactus grove and emerged into the great space before the long



pile of buildings which constituted the hacienda, looking so fresh in its clean coat of pink and green kalsomine, to learn that this house was four hundred years old. Great doors flanked each side of the main entrance, through which the three boys were piloted into the central patio, where they were courteously received by Don Jose, Donna Calderon—his wife—and Senorita Pepita.

The ground was paved with well-scrubbed cobblestones, laid in geometrical design, while lofty pecan trees shaded the inclosure. Fragrant roses bloomed here the year around. The boys were duly impressed by their reception, and Will was particularly struck with the senorita; but that lovely maiden had eyes only for Cyril.

"Faith, it's in the shade yez are left, Misther Will," whispered Corney, with a grin, as Pepita motioned Cyril to a spot by her side. "Shure, if they can't talk wid their tones, they can wid their eyes, which is a moighty convaynient way for exprissin' wan's silf sometoimes, so it is."

"You're right, Corney," replied Will, with a shade of annoyance in his tone. "It looks as if my name was mud in that direction."

"Don't yez moind, me b'y; there are others. The woods are full, so they are, wid purty girls down here. I've seen so many of thim' since we lift El Paso that me heart is brode wid kapin' track of 'em."

The donna spoke a little English, but the burden of entertaining the guests was thrown upon Don Jose's shoulders. Cyril tried his best to make himself understand by Pepita, and was satisfied he was making a wretched failure of it. Notwithstanding that fact, they seemed to find a good deal of satisfaction in each other's company.

The senorita could certainly talk with her eyes to the queen's taste, and that is a language that is current the world over. It is rather a dangerous method of communication between two such young and impressionable people as Cyril and Pepita. The young American, however, was not accustomed to flee from danger, while the Spanish girl loved to coquette with it, so by the time they all went into one of the main rooms of the hacienda, all of which were grouped around the central patio, for the evening meal, Cyril and Pepita were more than half in love with each other.

The only adornment on the walls of the dining-room, to Will's surprise, were illustrations setting forth the virtues of Chihuahua beer. What bothered Corney very much was the fact that the table, which was in the center of the room, was very high, while the chairs were very low; consequently when he sat down his chin was practically on the level with the table-cloth.

"Howly Moses!" he whispered to Will. "How are we to ate at all, at all?"

"When you're in Rome you must do as the Romans do," grinned Will.

At last the meal was over, and all adjourned to the grand sala, or best room of the house, the brick floor of which was covered with marble tiles. Pepita was very anxious to know where Cyril and his friends were going. She asked him the question in Spanish several times before he got hold of the drift of her remark. Cyril answered her by telling her father that they

were going to the mountains of Della Cruz, and he translated it to her.

She looked a bit disturbed at this and asked her father to tell Cyril that it was a dangerous place on account of the robbers who lurked in its fastnesses. He found out that it was strongly suspected by the family that Senor Garcia Gonzales was connected with those rascals. At any rate, it was on account of his shady reputation that his society was not welcome at the Calderon hacienda.

The boys were persuaded to stay two weeks at the Calderon home, and during this time Cyril made great progress in the Spanish language. He was continually in Pepita's society, and she laid herself out to teach him all she could, thereby acquiring herself quite an insight into the English. Will declared that it was the funniest thing in the world to hear them talk together; but, as they appeared to enjoy it, nobody had a right to kick.

"Begorra! it's a pair of turtle doves they look loike, do yez moind?" grinned Corney, one morning. "He'll be able to walk Spanish as well as talk it wan of these foine days."

"It's about time we got a move on, if we're going to find those lost mines of Montezuma," said Will, who was all eagerness to get down to business once more.

And so it came about that Cyril Young reluctantly decided that it was time for the party to take up their line of march once more for the Della Cruz mountains.

## CHAPTER IX.—The Twin Peaks.

Four days later they were among the foothills of the Della Cruz mountains.

"Now," said Cyril, "we must keep our eyes skinned for the twin peaks mentioned in the professor's note-book."

"That's what," replied Will. "The question is, are they straight ahead or off to the right or to the left? If we go in the wrong direction we shall waste days in useless hot-footing."

"I mean to inquire of the natives until I get some clue to their whereabouts."

"That will be the best way," agreed Will. "You're beginning to handle the Spanish language pretty cleverly."

"Shure, why wouldn't he, wid such a purty gurl as the Senorita Pepita at his elbow all the livelong day to teach him the ins and outs of the language?" grinned Corney. "Faith it was oursilves thot was jealous of yez, so we were."

"Don't blush, old chap," laughed Will. "We know you were pretty hard hit."

"What nonsense!" replied Cyril, with a rosy face.

The road they were now traversing was lined with immense palms, with great broad leaves, while here and there they noted the castor-oil trees. The orchids hung on the taller trees or sat in nests in the crotch, parasitic plants of every color making the trees into nosegays.

"Faith, this a wonderful country, so it is," remarked Corney. "It has ould Oireland baten to a sthandstill for color."

It was a full hour before they came across a native. He was carrying water in a pair of long



leather skins hung over his shoulders. Cyril asked him if he was well acquainted with the mountains.

"Si, senor," he answered.

The boys drew a penciled representation of the twin peaks, with the flat-top mountain between, and asked him if he had ever seen anything like that in the Della Cruz.

"Si, senor," and he waved his hand toward the southeast.

"How far? How many miles?" asked Cyril.

"Doce."

"How far is thot?" asked Corney.

"Twelve miles," replied Will.

"Does he mane in a straight loine?"

The native looked at the boys very hard, and finally explained that they could reach the spot by a roundabout way through the gorge ahead, and that they would have to travel all of twenty miles before they got a sight of the peaks. He wanted to know why the boys were going there, and when Cyril bluffed him off, he shrugged his shoulders and advised them to be on their guard against the bandits of the mountains.

"It's afraid I am we're walkin' into a bad nest, do yez moind what I'm tellin' yez. If yez remimber, both Senorita Pepita and Don Hosey himsilf warned us of thim same robbers."

"That's right," admitted Will, with a sober countenance.

"What are we going to do about it, Will?"

"Do nothing till we meet some of the gentry, and then if they interfere with us we'll fill them full of holes."

"Like a collender, faith. De yez know, me six-shooter is gettin' rusty for want of somethin' to do."

"Talk is cheap, Corney," replied Will. "You'd be the first to run if one of those chaps jumped out of the bushes on you."

"Will yez listen to thot insult, Misther Cyril? Me run, thot's got the blood of sixteen ginera-tions of kings in me vanes! Yez didn't know, I suppose, that the O'Brien, a king of Munster, was a blood relation of the original McFaul from whom I'm descinded?"

"No, Corney, we weren't aware that you have royal blood in your veins," grinned Cyril.

"Well, I have, faith. Thim were great days in Oireland when the four kings reigned over the land."

"I've no doubt but it was. I'm glad to hear you've got fighting blood in you. You may have a chance to spill a little of it among these Greasers before we get back to the Calderon hacienda."

"I hope not, Misther Cyril. Blood-letting is out of fashion."

"Not down here it isn't."

"I'm not worryin' about mesilf. I can hold me ind up, so I can."

About nine miles up the road wound the gorge referred to by the native water-carrier. They left the road and followed the gorge until they came to one of the most beautiful waterfalls they had ever seen. The hills rose all around it a thousand feet or more, and the sides of these hills from base to peak were densely covered with trees, whose leaves were almost a solid mass of green. The white water leaped from this green center a hundred or two hundred feet into a

curling, foaming river below. The boys, after pausing a while to admire the picture, rode down into a kind of valley, narrow and sinuous.

At length, as dusk was falling they came suddenly upon a break in the lower hills. The breach was quite wide, the elevations curving away to the eastward. As they rode toward it, thinking it was high time to bivouac for the night, Cyril all at once reined in his animal and, gripping Will by the arm, pointed right ahead.

"The twin peaks!" he cried, in a voice that tingled with excitement. "Do you see them, Will, and the flat-top mountain between them, just as Professor Euclid described the scene? I have no longer any doubt but that we are in the presence of the lost mines of the Montezumas."

"I see them," responded Will, the blood rushing tumultuously through his veins as he looked. "The sun throws their shadows down this valley in the morning. Just to think, old man, we are now actually looking upon the very picture, a representation of which I drew in your room on the night of the professor's death. It hardly seems true."

"The peaks are alike as two peas, aren't they?"

"They certainly are. Exactly the same height. The ends of a ruler long enough to span them would rest evenly on the top of each."

The horses and mule were soon tethered to stakes on the grassy hillside, and it was not long before Corney had a fire kindled and supper under way. The boys were hungry, all right, after their long ride from their last resting-place, and when everything was ready they did ample justice to the food and the fine Mexican coffee, which the Irish boy knew how to prepare in great style. They turned in early, for they were eager to begin operations, and all night long Cyril and Will dreamed of glittering gold mines in the heart of the mountains, while Corney's slumbers were disturbed by visions of the bandits of the hills.

## CHAPTER X.—What Corney Saw In the Mountain.

The boys were up early next morning, and the first thing they did when they came out of the tent was to cast their eyes toward the twin peaks that stood out bold and clear against a cloudless sky.

"It was on the top of that flat mountain that the altar of the chief god Huitzilopochtli stood," said Cyril, in a tone of great interest.

"It is so stated in the histories of the Aztec people," nodded Will. "If we went up there I dare say we might find some remains of the sacrificial stone still in existence. They were mighty big, solid-looking blocks."

"I suppose the people gathered all around here during the sacrifices."

"Probably. According to the pictures I've seen of the subject, they got as close to the stone as their numbers permitted."

"Many thousands yielded up their lives on that mountain, I've no doubt."

"That's what they did. The priests had things their own way in those days."



"Christianity has been a great boon to the world."

"I wonder at what hour the sun begins to peep over the mountains? Supposing that it doesn't rise in the right place at this time of the year—what then?"

"Oh, it doesn't vary much the year round, for we are not so far from the equator."

"What is our latitude, anyway? Do you know?"

"About eighteen degrees north."

"Where did you put those pieces of glass we brought along to look at the sun through? We'd better smoke them over the fire as soon as Corney is thought with it, so as to have them in readiness."

"I've got them in my handbag. I'll get them out, as your suggestion is a good one."

After the boys had finished their breakfasts the glasses were duly smoked and, when pronounced satisfactory, were laid aside until wanted.

"The best way for us to get a straight imaginary line from the points of the two shadows, which you and I will have to note and mark at the proper moment, will be to station Corney midway between us where we will interrupt our line of vision from point to point. Then we will start out and walk toward him very slowly, watching the mountain as closely as we can for that peculiar clue, visible at a certain point, which the professor's sudden death prevented him from recording."

"You're got the thing down fine, Cyril. We ought to be able to turn the trick, if the thing is possible of accomplishment."

The boys loafed around the trees until the sun rose above the mountain range. To their great delight, its course carried it up almost directly in the center of the space of sky between the two peaks.

"By jingo!" cried Will. "I'm more than ever convinced of the truth of the professor's translation of those hieroglyphics on that Aztec vase. Those peaks had to lie almost due north and south in order to be available for the purpose of a sun-guide. They stand so close together that in any other position it would be much more difficult to get the sun's altitude correctly without instruments made for such a purpose."

"We can easily see the points of the shadows from here," said Cyril. "What shall we mark them with?"

"A couple of those white rocks yonder will do. As soon as we have determined the proper length of the shadows we'll stand still at our posts and Corney can bring a stone to each of us. Do you understand that, Corney?"

"Faith, I do."

Cyril then explained to the Irish boy how he was then to take his place about midway in a direct line from where they each stood beside the stones. Finally the sun had risen high enough for them to get busy; so Cyril and Will, each with a piece of smoked glass in his hand, walked out to the edges of the two shadows, which were slowly creeping down the valley and began to keep pace with them. Every once in a while they took a sight of the sun. Simultaneously they came to a stop at length, as the burnished disk reached a position in the sky where a line drawn exactly through its center,

as well as the boys were able to determine, would rest on the apex of each of the two peaks.

"Now, Corney, get a move on. Fetch those two stones."

Corney, who had been an interested observer of the proceedings, reluctantly left the shade of a huge palm tree and carried a stone to each of his comrades, who deposited it at their feet.

The Irish boy was then properly stationed, after some trouble, in about the center of the imaginary line, intersecting the two white stones.

Everything being in readiness for the rest of the ceremony, at a signal from Cyril, he and Will started toward each other at a rate that was exasperatingly slow to Corney, who, having nothing to do but stand in one position in the boiling sun, was fully persuaded there would soon be nothing left of him but a grease spot. Finally they reached Corney, without having observed anything out of the ordinary in the face of the distant mountain.

"Well," asked Will, "what did you see, Cyril?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?" disappointedly.

"Not a thing. And you? Didn't you observe any uncommon point in the aspect of the mountain?"

Will shook his head.

"Well, what do you think?" asked Cyril, whose high hopes had also fallen to the zero point.

"I think that the landmark, whatever it was, must have been wiped out some time during the four hundred years that has passed since the mines were closed up."

"Looks that way, doesn't it?" replied Cyril.

"So yez didn't see nothin' at all, at all?" said Corney. "What a pity!"

Then he shaded his eyes and looked toward the mountain himself.

"Trosh! it's a hole bechune the hills I see from here, wid a funny-looking tree at the far end of it. Do yez think there's anythin' in thot?"

"Let me see!" cried both boys in a breath, with great eagerness.

"Well, yez can't both see to wanst, for when I move my head this way the hole isn't there. Nor is it there, faith, when I move me head this way. I can only see it when I stand here."

"You look first, Cyril. That's your right as boss of the expedition," said Will.

So Cyril took Corney's place, and he easily made out the fissure in the mountainside, with the odd-looking tree at its further extremity. Then he stepped aside and allowed Will to look, and then Will saw the same thing.

"Get another white stone, Corney, and plant it right here. I really believe we's got onto the clue, after all, for certainly this cut in the mountain, with the tree beyond, can't be seen from any other point of this imaginary line."

"Now," said Will, after Corney had marked the spot with another white stone, "let's get under the trees and cool off. I'm as hot as the dickens. We'll talk the matter over and consider what we'll do next."

"Corney, you're all to the good. If it hadn't been for your sharp eyes we would probably have missed the object at which we were aiming."

"Thru for yez, Mither Cyril. Faith, it's funny I found the right spot, all accydental loike, while yez two were walkin' the line like a pair



of monkeys on a tight-rope. Shure, it's the Oirish that get there every toime."

## CHAPTER XI.—The Specter of the Mountain.

The boys were eager to investigate the defile in the mountainside, but it was a good hour before they felt like making a move out into the blazing sunshine again. Before starting they took a bite of cold lunch. Then they marched out to the central white stone, whence the fissure was observable, and from that point started up the valley toward the foot of the flat-top mountain. Owing to the inequalities of the ground they soon lost sight of the distant break in the hillside; but they felt reasonably sure that they would eventually reach a spot close enough to the place to locate it. It was hot work hoofing it in the sun, over rocks and boulders, but they persevered for the end in view was worth the effort. At last they reached the foot of the mountain, which was covered with trees.

"I hope it won't be like looking for a needle in a haystack to find that hole," said Will.

"It's somewhere around here," replied Cyril.

At last, after an hour's search, they came upon it—a tall, narrow cleft in the face of the mountain, at the far end of which was a fantastic-looking bleached tree, withered and dead. They entered the defile and made their way up to the dead tree. It was a weird spot, lonesome and forsaken. The mountain rose in sheer elevation hundreds of feet above their heads.

"Do you think this is the entrance of the famous mines of Montezuma?" asked Will, with a thrill of excitement.

"If there's any virtue in signs, I think it is," replied Cyril.

"Shure, it looks more loike the entrance to hades, so it does," said Corney.

"What's the next step, now we're here?" asked Will.

"You've got me," answered Cyril, scratching his head. "Probably it's a matter of digging straight into the mountain ahead."

"Faith that's a foine prospect of hard worruk," said Corney, regarding the situation dubiously.

"You don't get much in this world unless you work for it," replied Cyril.

"Be hivins! Thot's no lie."

"I think we've seen all we want to see for today," remarked Will. "We'll bring up the shovels to-morrow morning and start the ball rolling early. In the meantime we can move our tent nearer."

"That's a good plan," said Cyril.

They walked to the entrance of the defile and, after taking a careful survey of the surroundings, started back to their tent.

In some way they managed to get separated, and the first thing Cyril knew Will and Corney had disappeared. He kept on his way slowly, looking back every once in a while, but there was no sign of his companions.

"I wonder where they's got to?" he mused.

He couldn't guess, so he went on, and in due time arrived at his tent.

After watching in vain half an hour for his friends to appear, he began to feel drowsy. So

he retired into the tent, lay down on his blankets and was soon asleep. Two hours later he was aroused by the appearance of Will and Corney. He knew by their faces and manner that something out of the ordinary had occurred.

"Where have you chaps been?" he asked, curiously.

"Don't say a worrud. Yez missed the adventure of your life," cried Corney.

"What have I missed, Will?" asked Cyril, eagerly.

"It will knock you silly when I tell you," replied Will, with a serious face.

"Well, don't keep me in suspense, old man."

"Corney and I stumbled onto the headquarters of the mountain bandit gang."

"You don't mean it!" exclaimed Cyril, half-incredulously.

"Isn't it a fact, Corney?" said Will, appealing to the Irish lad.

"It's gospel truth, Misther Cyril, on me wurrud as a McFaul."

"Gracious! So that villainous crowd are right here on our ground?" replied Cyril, aghast.

"That's what they are," answered Will. "And that fellow Garcia Gonzales, whom you had the run-in with, is the chief of them, too."

"How do you know?" asked Cyril, anxiously.

"Bekase we seen the ould villain," replied Corney.

"But he isn't old, Corney," said Cyril. "He's a good-looking chap of about thirty."

"Shure, that's roight. I mane he's old in rascality, so I do."

"How could you identify the fellow as Gonzales?"

"Didn't Will and mesilf hear thim men of his call him Gonzales? But we've stronger proof than that, more's the pity," added Corney, with a melancholy shake of the head.

"What do you mean, Corney? And why do you look so strange?"

"Yez had betther tell him, Will."

"I have bad news for you, Cyril," ventured Will, reluctantly.

"Bad news!" cried Cyril. "What do you mean?"

"That rascal Gonzales has carried off Pepita Calderon from her father's hacienda."

"And brought her down here on his den in the mountains, where he intends to force her to marry him."

"How do you know he has?" cried Cyril, greatly excited.

"Because we saw her a prisoner in his underground headquarters."

"Are you telling me the truth, Will Adams?" ejaculated Cyril, almost violently.

"Ask Corney."

"Shure, didn't I see the senorita wid me blissid two eyes?" corroborated the Irish boy, nodding his head positively.

"Pepita in the power of that villain!" groaned Cyril. "Some thing must be done, boys, to save her."

"What can we do against the crowd?" replied Will, discouragingly.

"What can we do? We must do something. I, for one, am not going to desert her, not if it costs me my life!" cried Cyril, the fire of resolution flashing from his eyes.



"I'm ready to do anything, Cyril, but——"

"Tell me how you made this discovery?" demanded Cyril, abruptly.

"I don't know how we managed to lose you," said Will, "but all at once you were out of sight. We started to retrace our steps, when suddenly the ground gave way beneath us and down we went somewhere, the bushes closing over our heads, leaving us in the dark. I struck a match and we looked around. We were in a kind of cavern. Noting that it would not be hard to crawl out into the air again, Corney and I determined to investigate the place. We made torches of brushwood and went ahead. The place went right into the mountain, and we followed it. Presently we came to a turn in the place and stopped, for our torches were nearly burned out, and we were afraid to venture further."

"Thot's right, faith. It's afeard we'd get lost in the bowels of the earth we were," put in Corney.

"While we were considering whether to go on a little further or retreat, we heard voices not far away. That excited our curiosity, and we crept forward to investigate, after dropping our expiring torches on the ground. We saw a bright gleam of light ahead and figures of men moving about and stretched upon the ground, smoking cigarettes. Finally our course was barred by a lot of brush that partially choked the passage. We had a good view from here of the room beyond. Soon after we came to a halt at this spot the man I presently learned to be Gonzales, the bandit leader, entered the cavernous apartment, and sent the men away somewhere. Then it was that Pepita Calderon was brought in by a couple of the rascals, and you might have knocked us both down with a feather at that moment, so surprised were we to see her there. I am not any too well up in Spanish, but I managed to understand a word here and there, and sometimes a whole sentence. Then actions speak louder than words, so that I tumbled to the drift of the interview. Gonzales had evidently kidnaped the senorita, and I made out that his purpose was immediate marriage. She scorned his advances to the queen's taste, but he gave her the laugh. She was in his power, he said, and intimated that she has as much show to escape him as water has of running up the mountainside. He gave her twelve hours to consider his proposal, and then the two rascals who brought her before him reappeared and carried her away again. Corney and I then made our way back to the cavern into which we had tumbled, found the spot we had entered at, and scrambled up into the outside air. We hadn't more than got there before Gonzales and a dozen of his men came riding out of the defile, dashed up the valley toward the waterfall and disappeared."

Will stopped as if that was the whole story. Cyril made no remark for several minutes. He seemed to be thinking—thinking how he could help Pepita out of her terrible predicament.

"We must take advantage of Gonzales's absence and try to rescue her," he said, at length. "You say a dozen men rode off with him. Probably that was the larger part of his gang. Maybe only two or three were left behind. We ought to be able to surprise and do them up. Are you

game to back me up in this, both of you?" he said, looking at his chum and Corney.

"You can count on me," replied Will, sturdily.

"And on me, too, faith," answered Corney. "I'm wid yez, be the hoofs of Balaam's rabbit! It's spilin' I am for a scrimmage."

"Get supper ready, Corney. We'll set out for that hole you fell into just as soon as it gets dark. Do you think you'll be able to find it again?"

"I think so," answered Will. "I took the bearings of the place before we left the neighborhood."

"All right," replied Cyril, cheerfully. "The safety of Pepita is of more importance than all the gold in the lost mines of the Montezumas."

He said this in a tone that caused Corney to wink impressively at Will. They wanted no better evidence that Cyril was thoroughly in love with the beautiful daughter of Don Jose Calderon. As soon as the sun set darkness fell quickly upon the face of the landscape. The boys lost no time in setting out upon the strenuous job Cyril had decided upon. The dark mountainside loomed up before them as they advanced. The gloom of the night was partially relieved by the brightness of the star-bedecked sky, but the stillness which brooded over nature's vast solitude was curiously oppressive.

"You are sure the opening in the mountainside is somewhere about here?" asked Cyril, as they drew near to the locality pointed out by Will.

"Yes. I know it by that bleached rock over yonder."

Cyril raised the lantern he carried and flashed its bright light in the direction his chum was pointing. A black opening appeared a short distance in front of them.

"Is that it?" he asked, drawing his revolver as a precautionary measure.

"No," replied Will. "That isn't the spot. But what is that, anyway?"

The three boys advanced toward the black-looking hole. Suddenly, without warning, a volume of thick white smoke issued from the opening, and as it melted away there was revealed, apparently floating in the air, a phosphorescent-draped skeleton.

"Howly mother!" gasped Corney, falling upon his knees in terror.

## CHAPTER XII.—In the Hands of the Bandits.

Cyril and Will started back in surprise, not to say consternation, as the gruesome figure unfolded its outlines before their startled gaze and then seemed to advance upon them.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Will. "What do you call that?"

"The saints presarve us! Take it away!" howled Corney, thoroughly frightened, if ever a boy was.

The boys fell back a short distance, without taking their eyes from the spectral vision, which continued to hover in the dim air, waving its bony arms about at random, as though warning them away from the spot. Cyril was the first to recover from the feeling of awe the "ghost" incited.

"It's some fake," he said. "Our presence has been discovered by the bandits and they are using this device to scare us from the locality. That



must be one of the entrances to their headquarters."

"It isn't the place Corney and I fell into this afternoon," said Will, beginning to feel easier in his mind after Cyril's words. "What shall we do? If it's a fake, we'd better make a dash at it and do the old thing up."

"No," replied Cyril. "That won't do at all. If those chaps in there, who are no doubt watching us, see that their spook isn't going to have a proper effect on us, they'll probably begin shooting next, and we may get hurt. As long as this isn't the right hole, we'd best pretend to be scared off. The other hole must be near here. We'd better search for it."

"It's somewhere among those tall bushes, I am almost sure," replied Will. "It is certainly not far from that white rock."

Accordingly the boys withdrew and, taking a roundabout course, approached the locality from an opposite point of the compass, keeping well within the line of bushes close to the hillside and observing great caution. Will was in advance, with his eyes on the alert for some sign showing the proximity of the hole. They were now out of sight of the place where the draped skeleton had appeared to them, but were drawing nearer to the spot every moment. Suddenly, as Will took a step forward into the bushes he went right down into them before Cyril's eyes, vanishing like a sprite through a stage trap-door. Cyril came to a dead stop, as did Corney behind him. Dropping down on his knees, the boy uncovered the lantern and thrust it into a yawning hole among the bushes. Its bright rays showed Will scrambling to his feet eight feet below the surface.

"Hurt yourself, old chap?" asked Cyril, in a voice of some concern.

"Not a bit. Come on down. This is the hole we were looking for," replied Will, glancing upward.

"Sure of that, are you?"

"Yes."

"Follow me, Corney," said Cyril, springing down into the opening, where he landed on a mass of soft dirt.

Corney followed immediately after him.

"Give me the lantern and I'll lead the way," said Will.

He swung the light to and fro as they advanced under the mountain, and the flashing rays revealed a long, narrow cavern that seemed to have been fashioned by the hand of man. At one point a flat rock protruded, the face of which was as smooth as a bit of unpolished marble. It was covered from top to bottom with Aztec symbols and hieroglyphics.

"Look at that," cried Will, pointing at it. "We seem to be right on the stamping grounds of Montezuma's subjects. Who knows but we may have blundered upon one of the approaches of the mines. If we have, 'twill save us an awful lot of trouble."

"I'm not bothering about the Aztec mines just now, Will. They will keep, same as they have kept for four hundred years. It's Pepita's safety I'm interested in at this moment. Come on and find that passage which leads into the headquarters of the bandits. We have no time to lose. Gonzales may return with his followers at any moment, and then the fat would be in the fire."

So Will started forward again, and in a few minutes they branched off to the left.

"This is the passage," whispered Will. "We've got to go cautiously now."

"All right. You know the ropes."

They went on.

"Here is the heap of brushwood which blocked our way this afternoon," and Will threw a glimmer upon the obstruction.

"Where is that room or cavern you say you looked into?" asked Cyril, in a low voice.

"Right in front of us."

"It's as dark as pitch there."

"That's because most of the crowd are away, I guess."

"We must make an opening here," said Cyril.

This was not a difficult matter to do, and they soon passed into the robbers' den under the flat-top mountain. Flashing the lantern about, they found themselves in a big cavern, in which were scattered wooden benches, rude tables of the same material, and many other evidences of occupation by man, plainly showing that this was the general gathering place for a crowd of rough-and-ready Mexican outlaws. Two openings led in opposite directions from the cavern.

"Which way did they take Pepita?" asked Cyril, anxiously.

"That way," replied Will, pointing to the opening running toward the center of the mountain.

"Then that's the way we will go," said Cyril, taking the lantern and now leading the way himself.

They passed a number of empty caverns, much smaller in size than the one they had entered first. Each of these they carefully scrutinized, but found them bare and untenanted. They did not have to go far, however, before they came to one across which a bit of gaudy drapery was hung. Cyril held up his hand, for he had noticed a glimmer of light coming through the edge of the folds of the fabric. Putting down the lantern, he drew back a corner of the drapery and looked in. The room, if we may call it such, was elegantly and picturesquely furnished. The rough walls were hung to the height of a dozen feet with a material similar to that which shut off the entrance. The floor was covered with a carpet rug of brilliant color. There were polished tables, softly upholstered chairs and lounges—in fact, all the elegant belongings of a refined Mexican boudoir. A rough-looking Mexican was lounging in a chair near the entrance, lazily puffing the inevitable cigarette, while at the far end of the place Pepita lay upon a richly ornamented couch. The reader may as well be informed that this elegant retreat under the mountain was Garcia Gonzales's private retiring room. Here he took his meals and slept, when not abroad among the haunts of civilization.

Cyril took it all in with a curious eye, and his blood quickened in his veins when his gaze rested upon the lovely girl who had become more to him than all else in the wide world—even his own family.

He motioned to his companions to take a look inside, and then he laid down to them in earnest whispers his plan of action. At a given signal he drew the curtain aside and, closely followed by Will and Corney, confronted the Mexican rufian who was on guard.



## CHAPTER XIII.—The Aztec God Huitzilopochtli.

The bandit sprang to his feet with a rude oath and reached for his gun.

"Stop!" cried Cyril to him in Spanish, "or you are a dead man."

The fellow saw the three gleaming revolvers pointed at him and, perceiving the folly of resistance threw up his hands reluctantly. Senorita Calderon, who had not been asleep, sprang to her feet in open-eyed surprise.

"Bind and gag that rascal," said Cyril to his companions.

It took but a moment to do this, as the rascal was thoroughly cowed. Then Cyril turned and advanced toward the couch.

"Pepita," he exclaimed, tenderly.

The girl swayed for a moment in the air, then with a little cry of delight, to which the boy's name was coupled, she rushed across the room and fairly sprang into Cyril's arms. Her arms twined about his neck, in her impulsive Spanish way, and she began murmuring incoherent expressions of endearment as she rested her beautiful head on his shoulder. It was an intoxicating moment for the young American, and he seemed to forget the perilous situation in which they all stood. Will, however, stepped up and brought him back to earth again.

"Come," he said. "We must get out of this, if we expect to escape with our lives. We have no time to spare, Cyril."

His chum nodded.

"Come, Pepita, we must go," and with Will leading the way, lantern in one hand and cocked revolver in the other, they passed out into the underground passage. They reached the main cavern without mishap, and were on the point of entering the brush-covered passage, when suddenly Garcia Gonzales and several of his men appeared at the other opening.

"Gee whiz!" cried Will.

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Corney.

"Great Scott!" muttered Cyril.

Then a scream from Pepita.

"El demonio!" roared Gonzales, furiously.

Cyril pushed the girl into the passage and drew his revolver.

"Seize them!" shouted the Mexican in Spanish.

"Stand back!" cried Cyril, raising his pistol.

Gonzales, who was no coward, drew his weapons from their holsters and, with a hurried aim, fired at the boys. Two bullets whizzed by their heads and flattened themselves against the wall, and under cover of the smoke the other ruffians dashed forward. Three revolvers cracked and three bandits went down wounded. Taking advantage of their confusion, the boys rushed through into the passage and hurried away. But Gonzales, with others of his band, was promptly on their heels. So quickly did they follow that the boys, pushing the girl forward in the dark—for they had covered the lantern, lest it should draw the rascals' fire, took the wrong turn and hurried further away by a new course into the depths of the mountain. And as they ran the sound of their pursuers faded away, for Garcia Gonzales and his men must have gone in the other direction, toward an opening in the moun-

tain, the existence of which he did not know, but naturally surmised they had accidentally discovered.

"We have taken the wrong road," cried Will, in a moment or two.

"Can't help that," returned Cyril. "It's too late now to undo the error. We must hide here until we can find a chance to escape by the way we came."

So they kept on, using the lantern now to light their way, till at once they came out into a vast underground chamber, in the center of which stood a monstrous graven image of sinister aspect. It had a broad face, wide mouth and terrible eyes. The light of the lantern was reflected from a thousand tiny sparkling points of the hideous figure, for it was covered with gold, pearls and precious stones, and was girt about with golden serpents. On its neck a fitting ornament were the faces of men wrought in silver and their hearts in gold.

"Howly staff of St. Patrick! What's that?" cried Corney, with goggling eyes.

The four fugitives gazed on this monster with feelings of awe akin to terror. Pepita was almost overcome, and clung closely to her young protector.

"Cyril," cried Will, in a tone which sent a thrill through his chum's veins and for the moment made him even forget the girl of his heart, "do you know where we are? We're in the mines of Montezuma—where probably man has not penetrated for four hundred years."

"How do you know that?" whispered Cyril, in an agitated voice.

"How do I know? This is the god Huitzilopochtli, which stood on the top of this mountain, and which, according to the words of the professor's notebook, was removed to the mines before they were sealed up."

"Great Cæsar! Can that be possible?"

"It is the truth, for have not we both read the description of this famous god in Aztec history? See, it tallies to the dot. The girdle of golden serpents, the men's faces and hearts, the jewels and precious stones! It is true to the descriptions handed down from the time of Cortez."

"I believe you are right," breathed his chum, stirred beyond measure at the thought that they were the first, since the days of Montezuma, to gaze upon the chief god of the Aztecs—in fact, outside of Cortez himself, who had been specially accorded the privilege, they were the only white-skinned persons who had ever looked upon its awful features. As the boys grew somewhat accustomed to their weird surroundings they began to examine the image closer.

"Cyril," cried Will, excitedly, "these precious stones seem to be of the finest quality. There must be a fortune or two upon this image. Talking about digging for gold and silver! Why, that isn't a circumstance to picking these diamonds and pearls, and sapphires and rubies. This is like the garden Aladdin wandered into in the 'Arabian Nights' story. I tell you, Cyril, if we can get away with this treasure alone we're made for life."

"Shure, we'll be afther fillin' our pockets and our boots, be gob, wid the stuff," grinned Corney, in high glee at the prospect of getting rich quick.

"You forget one important thing," said Cyril.



"Our retreat is cut off by the bandits, who may come in here after us at any moment."

"By the great toe of St. Peter! That's a fact, so it is," exclaimed Corney, with a fearsome glance into the gloom behind them.

"Don't you worry," said Will. "If those chaps knew of this place they'd have had this image stripped long ago."

"But in hunting for us they may flounder on it like we did ourselves," replied Cyril.

"Well, I'm going to get some of those diamonds right away," said Will, his eagerness to gather in the valuable brilliants overcoming every other consideration.

"Corney," asked Cyril, "do you mind stepping back to the entrance of this room and standing guard for a while?"

"I'll do that wid all the pleasure in the world, Misther Cyril, if yez will gather in the gold and precious stones, so that we can get out wid something whin the toime comes."

"That's what we're going to do, Corney."

"Thin it's meself will stand guard, and I'll blow the top of the head off the first haythen that sticks his ugly nose this way, so I will."

#### CHAPTER XIV.—Caught in a Trap.

Pepita was persuaded to hold the lantern while Cyril and Will proceeded to denude the god of its precious belongings. With the butts of their revolvers they loosened the gems from their fastening, and the pile which they deposited in their hats, after they had filled their pockets, made their mouths water. In actual value the jewels were worth over a quarter of a million, for most of the stones were large and of the finest quality, as befitted so distinguished a personage as the chief god of the Aztecs. During the pillage they were not disturbed by their enemies, and finally Corney was recalled and told to secrete as many of the valuables about his person as he could carry. Pepita also managed to stow away a great many of the finest gems, handed to her by Cyril.

"We'll come back another time and get the golden serpents and other gold and silver ornaments," said Cyril. "And then we'll see what else these mines contain."

"Shure, wid these moines on our hands we'll soon be as rich as Misther Rockefeller, so we will," cried Corney, in a tone of intense satisfaction.

"What will you do with your share, Corney?" asked Will.

"My share! Begob! I'll go back to ould Oireland, buy the country and have meself elected king, loike me great ancister, the O'Brien."

"In that case, if I were you, I'd tow the island over here and annex it to the United States," grinned Will.

"Shure, England wouldn't loike to lose us, Misther Will. Oireland is the brightest jewel in the British crown, do yez moind that, now."

While Cyril and Pepita were talking—or cooing, as Corney called it—together, Will and the Irish boy, with the aid of the lantern, started on a tour of discovery around the great cavern. They found wide steps of stone leading up to what ap-

peared to have been the main entrance. These steps terminated at a wide platform, from which galleries led off in several directions, penetrating the bowels of the mines. The entrance itself was blocked up by a wall of masonry, how thick the boys could only conjecture.

"It's a foine time of it we'd had diggin' our way through this, don't yez think, Misther Will," grinned Corney, as he rapped upon the well-set stones of four hundred years' standing.

"It would have taken a few boxes of dynamite to have made an impression on it," replied Will.

At a moment they heard a strange, far-away grumbling and muttering in the depth of the mine.

"What's that?" asked Corney, his hair beginning to rise on his head, for the sound was weird and uncanny.

"Give it up," said Will. "It sounded a long way off."

"Maybe it's the spooks of the ould haythen Aztecs kickin' bekase we've been afther robin' their image."

The sound came again, louder than before, rolling up through the galleries and filling the big cavern with the reverberations.

Corney was anxious to rejoin Cyril and make a break for the outside air. He was very superstitious, and he didn't like that sound for a cent. So they descended, and found Cyril and Pepita perfectly contented at the feet of the hideous god.

"Well, what did you find out?" asked the young leader.

"We discovered the original entrance to these mines," replied Will.

"Did you?" said Cyril, with a look of interest.

"It's all blocked up by masonry."

"Then there's no show of getting out that way?"

"Not the slightest. It would take several charges of dynamite to make an impression on it."

As they gathered up their hats full of gems that curdling sound came up again from the depths of the mine.

"Saints presarve us! Do yez hear thim? They know we're preparin' to go, and they don't like the idea of thim gems goin', too. Maybe they'll foller us."

"Perhaps in that case," laughed Cyril, "you'd better go ahead with the lantern, and we'll cover your retreat."

"Faith, I will, wid pleasure," and grabbing the lantern he started for the passage.

"Keep your eyes wide open for the Mexicans," warned Will. "You'd better keep the lantern covered."

Corney was about to "douse the glim," when suddenly there came to their ears a murmuring sound down the passage.

"It's thim Greasers comin' this way at last," he said.

Lights began to flash and twinkle in the distance and the growl of many voices came nearer.

"We're caught in a trap, I'm afraid," said Cyril.

"We must retreat to the galleries," suggested Will. "We may be able to hide there."

They hurried back and mounted the stone steps to the platform taking refuge behind a pile of loose masonry.



In a few moments Garcia Gonzales, leading his band of rascals, swarmed with lanterns and torches into the great cavern below.

The whole gang came to a pause in front of the image. Gonzales soon stirred his men to action, and under his direction they spread out and began to ascend the steps. Then again came the subterranean noise. The bandits paused. But Gonzales urged them on. Suddenly one of the bandits caught sight of Corney's head. Then came the shots. The boys returned the fire with disastrous effect. Several of the bandits fell.

"Deliver up the senorita!" shouted Gonzales.

"Never!" answered Cyril in Spanish.

Then came a tremendous shaking of the ground and Pepita shrieked:

"It is the earthquake. We are lost."

A second shock followed the first. The world seemed coming to an end. A great crack was made in the masonry behind them and the whole mountain seemed to recede and all hands were rendered unconscious. When Cyril again came to himself he looked around. They were again in the open air. The rest were just coming to themselves. Great was their astonishment to find themselves out of the cave and no mountain near them. All had crumbled into the low valley.

The four young people took a survey of their position. The mountain top had been leveled. Behind them what had been the big cavern was now a confused mass of rock and debris of all kinds. None of the bandits were in sight. They were evidently buried beneath tons of earth. The hats full of precious stones lay near them and sparkled in the sunshine. They went down to the place where the shelter had been erected, but everything was leveled and none of their belongings or even the animals could be seen. The bandits had cleaned them out completely.

## CHAPTER XV.—A Golden Risk Ends With A Golden Harvest.

"Shure, it's nothin' to ate we'll be gettin' at all, at all," groaned Corney, as he noted the wanton destruction perpetrated by the bandits the evening before. The boys, searching about the place, managed to find a can or two of American preserved chicken where the Greasers had thrown them, and of the contents of these they made a satisfactory meal, washing it down with pure spring water. With pieces of the torn canvas they made three impromptu bags to carry the precious stones, tying the folding ends together as one does the cloth around a plum pudding before it is put into the pot to boil. Then they took up their line of march up the valley toward the waterfall. They had not proceeded far before Corney, who was in advance, gave a shout of joy.

"Hurroo! It's not shanks' mare we'll have to depend upon, afther all."

"What do you mean, Corney?" asked Will, hurrying up.

"Shure, there's the horses of thim defunct Greasers. Don't yez see thim nibblin' the grass wid all the contintment in the wurruld?"

"You're right, Corney. This is great luck."

They waited for Cyril and Pepita to come up, to whom they pointed out the animals.

"We might as well take the whole caboodle with us. Don Jose will find them useful," said Will.

As they drew near the animals Corney suddenly uttered an exclamation.

"Look youder, will yez? There's siveral horsemen comin' down the valley. Faix, I hope it ain't more of thim bandits. It's a nice kittle of fish we'd be in."

The newcomers were too far off to be identified, but they were approaching at a smart pace. There was no way of escaping the notice of the approaching horsemen, so the boys got out and reloaded their revolvers while they walked toward the tethered animals. One man in a broad sombrero rode ahead of the others, as if in command of the party. Something about him attracted and held the senorita's attention. Her eyes took on a strange gleam, while her bosom rose and fell, as if her heart was beating furiously under her bodice. She gripped Cyril's arm tightly and stopped him, then leaned forward, her lips half-parted in her excitement.

"Mi padre!" (My father) she suddenly screamed.

Her cry arrested Will and Corney.

"What's thot she says?" asked the Irish lad.

"By George! It's Don Jose!" cried Will, in high glee.

"Don Hosey, it is? Hurroo! The country's saved, so it is!"

It was, indeed, Don Jose Calderon with half a dozen of his peon servitors, all well armed, who were bowling down the valley in search of Garcia Gonzales and Pepita. The meeting between father and daughter was a joyful one. And when she had explained to her parent how Cyril had rescued her, saving her life at the risk of his own, with the assistance of his brave young companions, the haciendado, as Don Jose was called, was profuse in his thanks, not only to Cyril, whom he regarded with the warmest friendship, but to the other boys as well. After the story of their thrilling adventures had been told, the entire party, with the horses of the bandits in charge, turned their faces up the valley and toward the Calderon hacienda. They put up at a roadside inn that night, and next day they reached Don Jose's home, to the great happiness of the distressed donna, Pepita's mother. There was high jinks about the hacienda for the rest of that day and well into the evening. It might be said that the American boys owned the place. Don Jose and his wife couldn't do enough for them, while the servitors took off their hats to them and bowed low with the greatest of respect every time they appeared.

"Well, if this don't bate the Dootch!" grinned Corney. "Faith, yez would think it was jukes we wuz be the way thim people are fallin' over themselves to do us proud. Ah, musha, it's a foine thing, so it is, to be distinguished, don't yez know."

"That's right," laughed Will. "We're cocks of the walk about here."

"Whisht! Don't say a wurrud! It's a foine mash I have on the senorita's maid. Sich eyes as she has! They go through me heart like a hot poker, so they do. I belave I'll roon off wid her whin we lave here, do yez moind."



"It's a pity you don't understand Spanish, Corney. Then you could make love to her in great shape."

"Don't yez worry about thot. We understand wan another to the quane's taste."

And while Will and Corney were having the time of their lives, Cyril and Pepita were enjoying themselves in their own way. They were sitting in the central patio under the shade of a big pecan tree. They seemed to be very happy, indeed, together.

"Pepita, I am soon going back to the United States—to my father's home on Staten Island, in the State of New York."

"No, no!" she cried, earnestly, nestling close to him. "You must not go. You must stay here with me. I should die if you left me."

"I'm afraid I can't stay, Pepita. I must return, for I have yet to go through college. But I will come back next summer—and every summer until I graduate. And then you will marry me, and come back North with me, and be my little wife forever more, will you not?"

"Your wife? Yes. I love you. The whole world is as nothing to me without you. You saved me from Senor Gonzales, whom I hated, and my very life I also owe to you. I am yours—yours fofever."

And so it came about that Cyril, before they took their departure for home, had an interview with Don Jose, the subject of which was of the utmost importance both to himself and Pepita. The result proved to be quite satisfactory to Cyril Young. Don Jose was perfectly satisfied to accept the fine young American as his future son-in-law. Cyril met with an equally happy reception from the donna. A grand party was held at the hacienda to mark the formal betrothal of the two young people. We are sorry to record, however, that Corney forgot himself on this occasion. Between the bright eyes of Mercedes, Pepita's maid, and the hilarity of the afternoon and evening, Corney forgot that it was wine instead of water he was drinking, and the result was that a couple of sturdy Mexican peons had to be called into requisition to carry him off to bed. The boys' bedroom was on the upper (second) floor, and opened onto the central court. It was late when they awoke, and then Will began to joke Corney on the big head he got the night before. All at once his eyes rested on a huge tarantula, a poisonous species of spider, which was making its way out of one of his shoes, which lay on the matting.

"Howly mother of Moses! What's thot?" he gasped, with staring eyes.

"What's what?"

"Why, thot thing," and Corney pointed in terror at the immense insect.

Will detected the tarantula at once, but instead of remarking its presence, he winked at Cyril and said:

"There's nothing there."

"Do yez mane to say there ain't any bug walkin' over thot mattin'?"

"Nary bug," grinned Will, while Cyril had to stuff the bed-clothes in his mouth to keep them laughing outright.

"Thin it's bewitched I am. Git a dochter right away, for the love of hivin. I've got a faver or some other Mexican disease."

That settled it. Cyril and Will roared, and then Corney discovered he was the butt of a joke.

"Faix, I'll git aven wid yez two for thot, so I will."

Then he grabbed up his trousers, shook them for fear of concealed centipedes, and then got into them as soon as he could. A few days later the boys started for the City of Mexico en route for the United States. Cyril and Pepita had a tearful parting, but they were young and the future full of golden hopes for them, which they expected some day to realize. Some of the finest gems in the collection the boys had brought away from the mines of Montezuma, now lost probably beyond all hope of recovery, were unanimously presented to Pepita before they left. The rest, being worth all of three hundred thousand dollars, according to Don Jose, were carefully made up into parcels and consigned to Senor Luis Pacheco, an expert in the capital city, on the advice of the owner of the hacienda, to be disposed of at the best figures obtainable, as the young Americans would not have been able to carry the gems across the border without paying a high duty, which, of course, they were not in a position to do.

When they arrived home at Staten Island they found that Cyril's father, mother and sister had returned from their European trip. As a matter of course, the boys had a long and thrilling story to tell, not the least interesting of which was concentrated about the lovely daughter of the noble Spaniard, Don Jose, of the Calderon hacienda. Cyril, as a matter of course, kept his promise to return to Mexico during the following summer, and he was accompanied by Will and Corney as a select bodyguard. Each summer while at Princeton he spent at the Calderon hacienda. A few days after he graduated, quite a party, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Young, Edith Young, Mr. George Adams, Cyril, Will and Corney, set out for Mexico, and were received at the hacienda with great honor. The marriage of Cyril and Pepita, now lovely beyond all compare in her glorious ripening womanhood, took place in the Catholic Church of the Assumption, in the neighboring town, and the ceremony was performed by the bishop of the diocese.

They left for Vera Cruz, en route for Europe, next day, while the American party remained two weeks to enjoy the bountiful hospitality of the hacienda.

Corney, who called himself an Irish grandee, with his one hundred thousand dollars, married Mercedes, the maid of Senorita Calderon, and eventually took up his permanent residence in Mexico with Cyril and his young Spanish bride. Will came to see them once in a while with his American wife, and those occasions were particularly happy ones for the boys whose Golden Risk had turned up trumps.

Next week's issue will contain "A SURE WINNER; or, THE BOY WHO WENT OUT WITH A CIRCUS."

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"Save me a sample of everything the patient takes," directed the young doctor. "He took a kiss this morning," faltered the pretty nurse.



## CURRENT NEWS

### POTATO PLANT'S LONG VINE

W. W. Wilson of Mount Sterling, Ky., raised seven hills of the old-fashioned Peach Blow potatoes this year and dug one-half bushel from the seven hills. Four of the largest weighed four and one-quarter pounds. One of the vines was 7 feet 7 inches long.

### SEVEN WORK BIG FARM

On the immense tract of land formerly owned by the Milltown Mennonite colony near Nenno, S. D., can be seen 20,000 bushels of corn piled in heaps on the ground.

Theodore Greger and his four sons, his nephew and William Brecht, a son-in-law, have done all the work on the farm this season, the seven men farming land which formerly supported thirty families of Mennonites.

Seventy head of cattle have been obtained to winter in the corn fields, where the corn stalks will furnish ample food.

### MAMMOTH CAVE IS CLOSED

Mammoth Cave, noted as one of the seven natural wonders of the world, was closed recently to tourists and sight-seers for the first time, so far as it is known, since the great cavern was discovered. The cave is in Edmonson County, Kentucky, eighty miles from Louisville.

A development company, which controls what it claims is a "new entrance" to the cave had diverted considerable traffic from the original or "discovery" entrance, it was indicated.

In an announcement that the original entrance had been closed until further notice, the trustee for the estate which owns the cave alleged that to reach Mammoth Cave through what has been advertised as the "new entrance" it is necessary to pass through six connecting caves. It was indicated by the statement of the trustee that the management of the original entrance would "seek the proper remedy" and that legal action against the development company for advertising that it controlled an entrance to the famous cavern was to be taken.

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# Wrecked On The Desert

— OR —

## THE ADVENTURES OF TWO BOY PROSPECTORS

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

### CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued).

"There is no danger. They are in another chamber of the cave. I don't think they will come in here. They have not intruded on my privacy as yet. I don't think Manuel would stand for it. He has known me since I was a child, and has always been very fond of me. But you alarm me about my father. And you came to hunt him up. Is Dr. Glick with you?"

"No, indeed. If it is safe to talk, I'll tell you all about it. But tell me first if these men are so fond of you, why did they tear you from your home?"

"It is the thirst for gold, Jack. Same thing which brought you and Arthur down into the desert at the risk of your lives. You see, my father found free gold in this cave. He gathered together a lot and hid it, thinking to return to the world on my account, but I persuaded him out of it. Manuel got wind of this. He cooked up this mutiny. He hated Andy, so he killed him—shot him, I hear. They took me as a sort of hostage to make my father reveal the hiding place of the gold. They are all tired of the dull life here. The last time Manuel went out for such things as we needed, we were afraid he would never return, and father felt sure that it was only on my account that he did return."

"But how did they ever learn the secret of the cave? Your father assured me that only you and he knew it. He thinks that the doctor must have stolen a description of it, and also a diagram he made."

"It may be so. I don't certainly know. The doctor was the first to vanish. He was not here when they brought me in, and I haven't seen him since."

The music had now ceased, and the Mestizos seemed to be quarreling again.

"They are surely drunk," said Jack. "I can tell by the way they talk. Isn't it possible that Manuel, when he went out last, brought in liquor on the sly?"

"Why, of course, it might be so, but——"

"Edna, did you ever see a drunken man?"

"No; I never did. You know, I scarcely remember my life outside of this oasis."

"I see. You are surely deceiving yourself. Perhaps they have fixed up a private still, and that's how they got their booze."

"Booze? What sort of liquor is that?"

"Excuse me for using such a word. It's just modern slang for any kind. If I only had a rope, Edna, I'd soon enough have you out."

"I'm worried about my father; dreadfully worried, Jack. I think you better get right back."

"And leave you to the mercy of those crazy traitors? Never! What are they saying? Can you understand?"

"Oh, yes. I understand Spanish as well as I do English. Manuel wants to go back to New Mexico, where they come from; the others don't. They are afraid of being arrested for old crimes they have committed. They want to cross the desert to California."

"At the risk of their lives! Do they intend to steal the car?"

"I haven't heard them say so, but I think that must be their plan."

"Why didn't one of them go to your father as soon as he came home. They were all gone when we got there but Pedro. Do you think he is in with them?"

"I'm sure he is not. But tell me all that happened, Jack."

Jack now related the adventures of the day and what happened on their return. Edna listened in silence, till he ceased to speak.

"Oh, father!" she murmured. "As if you had not had enough to bear without this! So you saw his poor face?"

"I did, and now I wish I hadn't. I won't ask you how it happened, Edna."

"Don't, please! And that dreadful man! He deserved a worse fate. Oh, I'm so glad he is dead!"

"We must decide on something, Edna. Do you insist upon me going back?"

"I must, Jack, for father is very dear to me. I—oh, heavens!"

"What is it? Speak!"

"What they are saying," replied Edna, in a quick, agitated way. "Jack, they are drunk. You are right. Manuel has fallen asleep. Juan, Ramon and Tony are coming in here! Jack!"

She had no need to call. Jack had dropped through the hole and stood at her side.

"I am here to defend you, little girl," he said, quietly, "but, oh, don't I wish I had brought the revolver!"

Arthur had left the revolver under the pillow, as it hurt in his hip pocket while he was lying down.

With such speed as he was able to make, the startled boy hobbled back into the room, but he was not able to gain possession of the weapon before Glick appeared in the doorway.

"Hold on, doctor!" he cried, backing towards the bed. "What would you do? A doctor kill his patient? Who ever heard of such a thing?"

He could not have hit it better, for Glick burst into a wild fit of laughter, which continued a full minute.

"Good!" he roared. "Good! Ha! Ha! Ha! Best joke I ever heard! Better than that old white-whiskered thing of the undertaker paying the doctor a commission. Ho! Ho! Ho!"

While he laughed, Arthur managed to thrust his hand under the pillow and get the revolver, which he slyly slipped into his hip-pocket.

(To be continued.)



## GOOD READING

## FIRES PUT OUT WITH GUN

They are using a pistol fire extinguisher in Germany. It is loaded with cartridges containing a powder, which are set off by the trigger striking a percussion cap. The powder generates carbon dioxide, which prevents combustion.

## LEPROSY IN INDIANS RARE

Dr. A. Da Matta writes in Brazil-Medico (Rio de Janeiro) that in his twenty-six years of practice in Amazonas Province he has never seen but two Indians with leprosy. In prehistoric pottery figures from Peru there is no representation of any deformity suggesting leprosy, although representations of other deformities are common and none of the early explorers mentions leprosy among the natives.

## EFFECTS OF TOBACCO

Tobacco smoke does not affect the human system in a direct physical way, it has been demonstrated. Its action is due to its physical influence, through its taste, odor and the visual sensations it produces. Heavy smokers can tolerate doses of eight milligrams of the pure base of nicotine, whereas the non-habituated feel noticeable effects after a dose of one-half milligram of the drug.

## NEW TYPE OF AUTO

The French are planning to establish an automobile connection across the Sahara desert. Experiments are now being carried out under the control of army authorities with automobiles especially constructed to cross the sand and climb up and down the sharp declines.

The plan has been elaborated by an engineer, M. Kegresse, to cross the African desert from Touggourt, the southern terminus of the Algerian Railroad, to Burem on the Niger, 250 kilometers east of Timbuctoo via Ain-Sala, Tanesruft, Tinzouten and Kidul. The total distance is 3,000 kilometers.

M. Kegresse intends to make the trip with six automobiles, of which three will conduct the rest half way. He expects each to make about two hundred kilometers daily, so that the complete journey will take fifteen days. Each car will carry 600 liters of gas.

Experiments carried out under conditions far more difficult than those existing in the desert have given entire satisfaction. The cars are of the caterpillar type with a rubber band, invented by the engineer Hinsten.

If successful, the trip will mean the establishment of road communication throughout the whole of the French African empire, which will be enormously important for the future development of that area. The strategic importance is also considerable, which explains why the military are closely watching the experiment.

## LAKE VICTORIA NYANZA

Reuter's representative has had an interview with Commander B. Whitehouse, R. N., who has lately returned to England on completion of a de-

tailed survey of the British portion of the Victoria Nyanza, undertaken by the Uganda Railway Committee in view of the completion of the railway from Mombasa and of the consequently enhanced value of the lake and its navigation. This, the first detailed Government survey of this great inland sea, has resulted in very considerable additions to our knowledge of the lake regions. It has been found that an inclosed stretch of water forty miles long exists on the east side of the lake, and that outside its mouth a valuable tract of high country with a large population juts out into the lake where previously only a few islands were supposed to be.

Commander Whitehouse, with one assistant, Mr. C. S. Hunter of the Uganda Railway, accompanied by thirty Swahilis, spent thirteen months in exploring in small steel boats every part of the British shore of the Nyanza. Over 2,200 miles of coast line, or mainland and island have now been accurately charted, and in parts the maps of the lake shore have been altered beyond recognition. The lake is found to be studded with a very large number of islands of varying size, many of them densely populated. Preparations are being made for the development of the lake traffic with the opening of the railway, and passengers leaving the train at Port Florence will step on board twin-screw steamers alongside the jetty, which will convey them to the different stations. One of the steamers for this service has already left England. Another steamer will follow.

These vessels are 175 feet long and draw 6 feet of water.

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HARRY E. WOLFF, Publisher, Inc.

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# INTERESTING RADIO NEWS AND HINTS

## "BLIND SPOTS"

Contrary to the popular belief, there are no places in the world which are continuously and regularly "blind spots" to wireless. There are, however, various areas where messages will be picked up very faintly one day and quite loudly the next. Among such places may be mentioned a district of southern California, another in Brazil and a third off Newfoundland, while various others exist in different parts of the world. There are places in England where reception is said to be very "queer." For instance, in some areas it is easier to hear a distant station than one nearby. Nobody knows the exact reason for these freaks, but the general idea is that local peculiarities of the earth's surface, and mineral ores underneath the surface, are largely responsible.

This leads to an interesting line of thought. We have all heard of the ancient "divining rod," by which hidden springs were found beneath the earth's surface. It is possible that in some not very distant future science will be able to detect the presence of mineral deposits beneath the earth's surface by the action of radio waves in that particular locality. When this is possible, if it ever is, considerable money and time will be saved by mining engineers, who must now depend more or less upon the formations of the earth's surface in guiding them to the hidden deposits of mineral ores.

## HYPNOTISM BY RADIO

Possibly there are still extant a number of persons who are unconvinced of the potency of hypnotism. We recall an incident a number of years ago when a famous hypnotist was to give a performance in a small Western town. One of the town characters expressed his disbelief in hypnotism and asserted that he'd "show the performer up." He did, but with startling results. The audience roared while he laboriously wiped his face with flour, tried to bend his arm and in other ways assisted in the merriment as a fact and has recognized a value in it.

It remained for Science and Invention Magazine, in co-operation with Radio Station WHN, located at Ridgewood, L. I., to demonstrate hypnotism by radio. Never before had the attempt been made. The hypnotist was, of course, stationed at the broadcasting station, while the subject and the witnesses were stationed in the magazine's offices in New York. Three demonstrations were made on the subject and each proved successful. During one of them the subject was placed in a rigid condition, his head on one chair and his feet on another. A man could sit on the center of his body easily. During the last demonstration a needle was passed through the skin of the subject's arm without loss of blood and without pain.

It is now possible for a good hypnotist, a medical doctor, as the magazine points out, to go to the nearest transmitting station and treat thousands of patients at one and the same time by this

means for insomnia, and by post-hypnotic suggestion for many other ailments.

## RADIO AMPLIFIERS

In transformer coupled radio frequency amplification the actual amplifying is done by the vacuum tubes. The problem involved is to transfer his amplified energy from one tube to the succeeding tube in order to get further amplification. In this case it is done by means of a transformer which consists of two coils of wire, one being the primary and the other the secondary. The windings are so arranged that there is no step-up ratio between them. There is no means of varying the coupling between them, consequently they must be designed to cover a certain band of wave lengths to which they are supposed to respond. With this system there is no adjustment necessary. The transformer operates automatically.

In tuned radio frequency some form of coil and condenser is used in the plate circuit of each vacuum tube. These are tuned to resonance with the station to which it is desired to listen. It is thus possible to obtain the maximum of amplification with the maximum amount of selectivity. By this system each stage of radio frequency is in absolute tune with the incoming wave. The disadvantages of the two systems are as follows: Transformer coupled amplifiers must necessarily be designed so as to cover a wide band of frequencies. The result is that they will respond to one certain frequency; either below or above this the transformer will not operate with full efficiency. With tuned radio frequency the disadvantage lies in the large number of controls necessary to tune the circuit to the incoming wave.

## DETECTOR REQUIREMENTS

One of the most important parts of the vacuum tube receiver is the grid leak, grid condenser and the use of the C battery. Many experimenters believe in using a standard grid leak in any type set, but this is an error, as each tube in the circuit demands its own value of resistance.

The usual connections are where the grid leak resistance is connected directly across the condenser and where the grid leak is connected across the grid of the tube to the filament. By experiment it can be told which side of the filament to use. The signals will be weak if the wrong side is selected.

The experimenter should realize that whatever size of grid leak is used or however it is placed in the circuit it has a tendency to reduce the sensitivity of the tube. The work of the grid leak is to permit the accumulated charge on the grid to leak off after the signal has passed, but it is also apparent that the resistance allows the signal charge to leak from the circuit. This disadvantage fortunately is more than offset by its usefulness in the circuit.

The C battery—also known as the grid biasing battery—consists of a number of flashlight batteries. Since these cells supply but a very small



current, merely maintain the grid negative with respect to the filament, their life may be considered to be the shelf life, which is from six to nine months. The amount of the grid bias voltage must also be varied. Values of voltages of from 1.5 to 20 volts are common. The voltage may be supplied to the grid of a resistance or inductance coupled amplifier. In place of using a C battery it is often sufficient when desirous of obtaining a small negative potential on the grid to make use of the voltage drop in the filament circuit. A small resistance of from one to three ohms is placed in the filament circuit. Normally when no resistance is used in this circuit and the voltage across the filament is, say, about 5 volts, the bias voltage upon the grid may be 2.5. If a greater bias is needed to utilize a greater voltage drop across the resistance.

When more than six or eight volts are required by the grid, dry cells must be used.

### RADIO WAVES REACH MARS

\* The question has often been raised as to whether it will ever be possible to communicate by wireless with the inhabitants of other planets. The wireless waves in the ether go on forever, so there will be no reason why people cannot communicate with other planets if the inhabitants have the proper receiving apparatus. Some of the planets, however, are so far away that electric waves traveling at a speed of 106,000,000 miles per second would take several thousand years to reach them. There is very little chance of these remote planets hearing the nightly radio concerts sent out from the wireless test station at the East Pittsburgh works of the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company. They are now known to several thousand amateurs all over the United States, and having a wave length of 300 meters, are readily picked up.

And what single fact proves more forcefully that the art of radio is in its earliest stages than the inability of even experts to answer the question uppermost in the minds of all followers of the industry, namely, "How far will a receiving set receive?" This is the query put with the greatest frequency. Distance seems at first to be the only criterion by which a set can be judged, yet when it is asked no one can answer it. Experts know that there are too many factors entering into the performance of any receiver to permit of even an estimate.

Not only in the realm of receivers does this ignorance hold forth. It is said that the manufacturer of a transmitting set recognized far and wide for its efficiency, and especially for its record-breaking distance of 8,000 miles' transmission, sells its outfit with a guaranteed range of only 100 miles.

In the first place, weather conditions have a great deal to do with the working range of either transmitter or receiver. And as the atmosphere often changes its characteristics abruptly, the weather is a real deciding factor.

Another fact is the skill of the operator. How many times this is brought to the notice of the average fan. Perhaps it is a receiver which has failed to "pull in" more than one or two local stations. Another man with a mysterious touch

toys with the dials for a few minutes, raises the filament heat here, reduces the coupling there and seemingly, without effort, distant stations come sliding in. The capabilities of any set are not mastered for many months. Sometimes for a year after the owner first secures the set he is finding out more of its peculiarities. As the number of controls increase the difficulty increases in greater measure because the combination of setting multiply rapidly.

The mechanical aspect of a receiving station likewise offer many possibilities of success or failure. Some of them are entirely outside the province of the user, and in this class fall the influence of surrounding structures.

In this connection it is interesting to relate the experiences of a radio experimenter well versed in operation. This man had erected a single wire aerial about 100 feet long. With extreme care he had pointed the wire in the direction for best reception. It was far enough away from all trees and other buildings to prevent any leakage. For his experimental work he had selected an efficient four-circuit tuner. On connecting the set to the collecting system he discovered that for some reason the outfit refused to function. Careful examination of every inch of aerial and ground showed no flaws. The set itself was taken to another location and found to operate there perfectly. But on its home ground it was a failure. In disgust the entire apparatus was put aside for several days.

Finally, in making other experiments, it became necessary to add another stretch of wire beside the first and separated from it by a spreader eighteen inches wide. A separate lead-in was taken from each wire. Later on, while tinkering with sets in the laboratory the recalcitrant receiver was connected to the combined lead-ins. Immediately the set sprang into action, producing a volume that was surprising and a selectivity that was amazing. To prove that the added wire was the cause of the difference, one lead-in and then the other was removed. The set would not work with either one alone, but with both together the results were astonishing. And yet—if ten radio engineers were to be asked for specifications for the best aerial for broadcasting reception the answer in every case would be "A single wire about 100 feet long."

This is but one instance. Similar experiences could be quoted by the column, yet the sum total would merely act to bewilder the novice. It is this inconsistency of radio, the sudden change from disgusting inoperation to startling accomplishments that have supplied the fuel for the radio boom. Not only is every set an enigma; every set on every night is a new puzzle. What it will do cannot be foretold. Without the alteration of a single part the same set will double its receiving distance on consecutive nights.

Naturally then, with so many variables, there can be no such thing as "receiving distance." Reputable manufacturers know better than to advertise distances. Local stations 250 or more miles away are brought in by a combination of good luck, clever operation and a liberal mixture of mysterious action.

We do not know if the same difficulties we experience hold good on the planet Mars, but it probably does if they have radio receivers.



## FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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## ITEMS OF INTEREST

## HE WORSHIPS GOD OF SUN

Dr. Marcel Wilson, a native of San Francisco and resident of Sacramento, has accomplished his life's ambition. He has erected a little clay and rock temple to his god—God of Sun—on the banks of the Sacramento River, just above the city.

The temple, perfect in design, is 5x7 feet broad and is 6 feet high, and Dr. Wilson has labored for five weeks in building it. Dr. Wilson declares his little temple will be free of petty strife that he claims exists in other churches. The builder declares the church will stand for years as a mark of devotion and respect to the God of Sun.

## TOELESS WOMAN FALLS DEAD WITH 110 FOLDED DOLLAR BILLS

In the handbag of a woman who fell dead on the sidewalk in front of 241 Bowery, New York, the other night the police of the Clinton street station house, where the body was taken, found \$110 in dollar bills, each folded separately. An examination of the body by the matron at the station house revealed that the woman had no toes on either foot.

Patrolman Ferri saw a crowd collecting and investigated. He found the woman on the sidewalk. An ambulance was summoned from Bellevue Hospital. In the woman's handbag was found a slip of paper with the name "Bridget Kennedy" on it. No address was given. She was about 55 years old, 5 feet and 6 inches tall and weighed 250 pounds. Her hair was gray and eyes brown.

## RUBLES BOUGHT ONLY ONE NAIL

The ruble, once a highly-esteemed bit of coinage and now fallen into ill repute with the entrance of the royal Romanoff family into the down and out club, has been the subject of many a quip and humorous anecdote, but perhaps there is no story which better serves to illustrate the heroic stoicism with which the Russian peasant accepts his fate than that which a prominent Brooklynite brought back with him on his recent

return from a trip to Soviet Russia. Despite the tragedy of the tale, it nevertheless tickles the Russian's funny bone wherever it is told.

A trader bought 100 boxes of nails, took them into the country and sold them at a profit of 100 per cent. This seemed to him a good profit and he repeated the operation. Meanwhile, however, prices had gone up so rapidly, on account of the decline of the ruble, that he was able to buy from the proceeds of his first sale only 50 boxes of nails. These made up his stock of goods on the next trip.

He took the boxes into the country and sold them at 200 per cent. advance. When he returned to the city to buy a new supply, however, his money would only purchase 25 boxes. After disposing of this new stock, he once again wended his way cityward to discover that, though his rubles had multiplied into millions, they had so fallen in value that they would only buy one nail instead of 100 boxes as originally.

Thereupon, he invested his capital in this single nail, drove it into the wall, and hanged himself from it.

## LAUGHS

Snapp—Well, all the fools are not dead yet.  
Mrs. Snapp—I'm glad of it. I never did look well in black.

Elsie—After I wash my face I look in the mirror to see if it's clean. Don't you? Bobby—Don't have to. I look at the towel.

"You're kinder to dumb animals than you are to me—your wife." "Well, you try being dumb and see how kind I'll be."

"Was there any sign of mourning when Miss Prettyface snapped up the best matrimonial catch of the season?" "Sure there was. All the belles were told."

Stranger—Why, Pat, there used to be two windmills there. Pat—Why is there but one there now? Pat—Sure they took one down to l'ave more wind for t'other.

Critic—Do you think your new play was successful? Actor—Yes; there was not a hiss in the whole house. Critic—Well, you know people cannot yawn and hiss at the same time.

Judge—Have you anything to say for yourself before I sentence you, prisoner? Prisoner—Yes, your lordship; I taught your wife and daughters the tango. Judge—Twenty years.

Mamma—Johnny, see that you give Ethel the lion's share of that orange. Johnny—Yes, ma. Ethel—Mamma, he hasn't given me any. Johnny—Well, that's all right. Lions don't eat oranges.

"You don't seem enthusiastic about elevating the stage." "No," said the theatrical manager. "The more you try to elevate the stage, the more depressed the box office seems to become."



## INTERESTING ARTICLES

## DIVER SEIZED BY OCTOPUS

A diver working on the submerged wreck of the French battleship *Liberte* at Toulon was attacked by a huge octopus, which did not relinquish its manifold embrace until the man's comrades had cut it to pieces.

The diver, Jean Negri, fought desperately with the monster under water for several minutes. He finally freed one arm and plunged his trident into the body of the creature. The octopus, however, held fast, whereupon Negri gave the signal to be hauled up.

When his companions saw the writhing monster emerge they were panic-stricken, but the plight of their comrade appeared so serious that they went to his aid and released him with their knives.

## \$100,000 SCHOOL HAS NO STUDENTS

In the Sterling Mines district in Rockland County, N. Y., a fine school building recently was erected at a cost of about \$100,000. Now there are practically no inhabitants in the district and no school is conducted, as there are no children to be taught.

The sudden change is due to the fact that the mines, which furnished the only occupation, shut down and a complete exodus of the population followed. The district is bonded for the school. The property owners in the district are the Harriman estate, owner of the Sterling Iron and Railway Company, and the Bethlehem Steel Company.

## POSED AS MAN

Masquerading as a man, Ethel Kimball, forty-year-old Brighton woman, was sentenced to an indefinite term at Sherborn, Mass., after she had been found guilty of idle and disorderly conduct and with violation of the true name law by registering at a local hotel with another woman under the name of George Moore and wife.

Since she was twenty years old, Miss Kimball has had a penchant for wearing masculine garb, which has brought her into the police circles on an average of once a year.

Two years ago she created a wild sensation when, posing as James W. Hathaway, son of a wealthy leather manufacturer, she "married," on Thanksgiving eve, a Somerville girl, with whom she lived for more than a month before the secret of her identity was revealed by a police woman, who accompanied inspectors who arrested her on the charge of stealing an automobile.

## BROOKLYN LAD MAKES 2,000-MILE TRIP ON MOTORCYCLE

Safely home after a 2,000-mile motorcycle trip from Brooks Field, San Antonio, to New York, which his friends in the South said he would

never complete, a husky Brooklyn boy, Howard S. Behr of 1911 Avenue L, describes a trip so full of hazards that even he does not know how he ever reached home.

Behr was a cadet flyer at the Texas field and after two months of it he decided the training was not of the type he wanted and applied for his discharge. He said he had been under the impression he would receive a thorough technical training.

The Government gave him \$100 for transportation and instead of using it for railroad fare he added another \$75 and purchased a government motorcycle. Behr is an expert rider and a good mechanic. He felt it was a good investment; anyway he wanted the motorcycle when he reached home.

Friday, Nov. 2, was the day of a big rainstorm in San Antonio and surrounding country, and fellow classmates of Behr who watched him prepare for his trip said he would never make it. At noon he chugged out of Brooks Field. The mud was so heavy for the first few hours he made but a few miles and many times he felt like selling the machine if he had a good offer.

Crossing the State of Oklahoma he found the roads just as bad, and Behr deciding to find something better took to the railroad tracks and rode the ties. Before reaching them he had a nasty spill and twisted an ankle and bent his handlebars out of shape. He said every time he slowed up his machine jounced so it was worse than riding a broncho. Traveling fast the going was smooth. If a train had come along—well, Behr said, "there wasn't any train due at that time, I believed."

Some time later Behr, spinning along at a fast pace hit a rut and took a "header" over the handlebars into the road. He was unhurt save for a contusion on his arm. At another place while he was crossing a section of the road which was under two feet of water, his motor stopped dead in the middle of the pool and he was forced to wade the rest of the way, pushing the machine ahead of him.

Sunday night he reached Indianapolis and stopped long enough to tune up his motor which was badly in need of adjustment. The following day he started for Cumberland, Md., and reached there in record time. Sometimes he made 70 miles an hour, Behr said. He made the 340 miles from Cumberland to New York in just 12 hours, averaging about 28 miles an hour for the entire distance. The most hazardous part of his trip was on the road through the Ozark Mountains, when he ran without a headlight on his machine.

Behr said he stopped in a hotel nearly every night and the entire cost of the trip was not over \$55. He said everywhere he was impressed by the readiness and willing spirit of people, totals strangers to him, to help him out of trouble.

Behr went to Brooklyn Poly in 1912 to 1916 and has studied at Marquand for several terms. He expects to enter the mechanical end of the airplane business if he can find the opportunity.



## HERE AND THERE

## A ROBBER-PROOF PAYROLL PLAN

A new idea adopted by a large Detroit company consists in putting five dollars in cash in each envelope and giving a check for the balance. Where large balances are required for checking accounts the amounts due each employee are credited to a special account in the savings department so that an employee may draw the entire amount due him or draw only part, as suits his pleasure. This encourages the establishing of savings and checking accounts, leading to thrift and economy, and frequently to the household budget system.

## BOARDS THREE FEET WIDE

Workmen in tearing down the Seth Gay house which was built at Gardiner, Me., 140 years ago, found boards twenty-six inches to three feet in width, hand-forged nails, lock-pointed timbers, door frames and door casings with moldings, each made from one piece of lumber. Walls were planked, lathed and plastered, and in the bottom story they were brick lined and plastered and each room contained its fireplace. An old newspaper dated 101 years ago was found in a portion of the wall.

## THEFT OF \$75,000 IN STAMPS

A confession that he systematically has robbed the Post Office Department of stamps valued at \$75,000, after nearly twenty-five years in its service, has been obtained, according to Federal officials, from Herman C. Davis.

Davis is under \$5,000 bond, fixed recently by United States Commissioner MacDonald after he had signed the confession and offered restitution in part. He admitted having planned the thefts carefully and carried them on for four years.

His work on a committee charged with destroying damaged stamps, the confession says, enabled him to take them and then swear to their destruction. Davis said he has about \$30,000 on deposit in two Washington banks and owns real estate and securities valued at a considerable amount.

## FINE GREENLEAF \$250 FOR PLAYING SHOEMAKER

Ralph Greenleaf, the world's pocket billiard champion, has been fined \$250 by the National Championship Pocket Billiard League officials, charged with a violation of Rule 9 in playing an exhibition match with J. Howard Shoemaker at the Strand Billiard Academy on Nov. 22, 23 and 24.

Previous to the action of the league officials, Greenleaf tendered an apology to the league. Official announcement of the action of the league was made known recently by President Frank A. Dwyer.

Joseph Mayer of the Hudson Recreation Company of Philadelphia, who holds a contract on Greenleaf's services until April 5, 1925, plans to submit his bill for damages for the loss he claims to have suffered as a result of the Greenleaf-Shoemaker match. The receipts for that match were ordered impounded and will be held until

the extent of damages incurred by Mayer has been approved.

As soon as Greenleaf complies with the league's ruling and pays the fine he will be permitted to resume his league games.

## SOME FACTS ABOUT HANDBALL

Handball is known the world over in various forms and by many names. Ireland is the home of handball as it is known in this country.

Handball is the native game of Spain. There it is called "pelota." There are several variations of the game; some are played on a one-wall court, some on two walls and some on four. The four-wall game is the official one. The court used is eighty feet long.

Some forms of pelota require the use of the cesta, a curved basket-work arrangement on the hand with which the ball is played.

Pelota is the national game of Cuba and many South American countries, especially those that were settled by the Spanish.

In Cuba the game is known as "jai-alai," or "merry game."

The English play handball under the name of "fives," because of the five fingers of the hand. Every English school has "fives" courts. Eton alone has forty of them.

In the mining regions of Pennsylvania there is a popular game known as alley ball, which is nothing more than one-wall handball. Two players Gorman and Wynne of Inkerman, have not been beaten in nearly thirteen years. The front wall used in this game is 35 feet high and 30 feet wide. The miners' game is to tire their opponents out, and for years they have succeeded.

A crack team of handball players from the New York Athletic Club took on Gorman and Wynne not long ago and got one of the worst beatings in their lives.

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# The \$12 a week mechanic who became a millionaire!

**T**WENTY-THREE years ago, John C. Wahl was working as a mechanic in Peoria, Illinois, at \$12 a week.

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It is interesting to note that the change for the better in the life of John C. Wahl came the day he saw an advertisement that hit him straight between the eyes. As he puts it, "it told how the International Correspondence Schools could make a draftsman of a fellow without interfering with his daily work." That day, John C. Wahl enrolled and started to build for the future. His present success is proof that he builded well.

"Pick the line of work you like best," he said the other day, "and stick to it. Study hard and success will take care of itself. Nothing is impossible when a man really makes up his mind that he's going to get ahead."

John C. Wahl is just one of thousands of I. C. S. students who have made good in a big way. The lives of such men should be an inspiration and a guide to every man who wants a better job and a bigger salary.

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